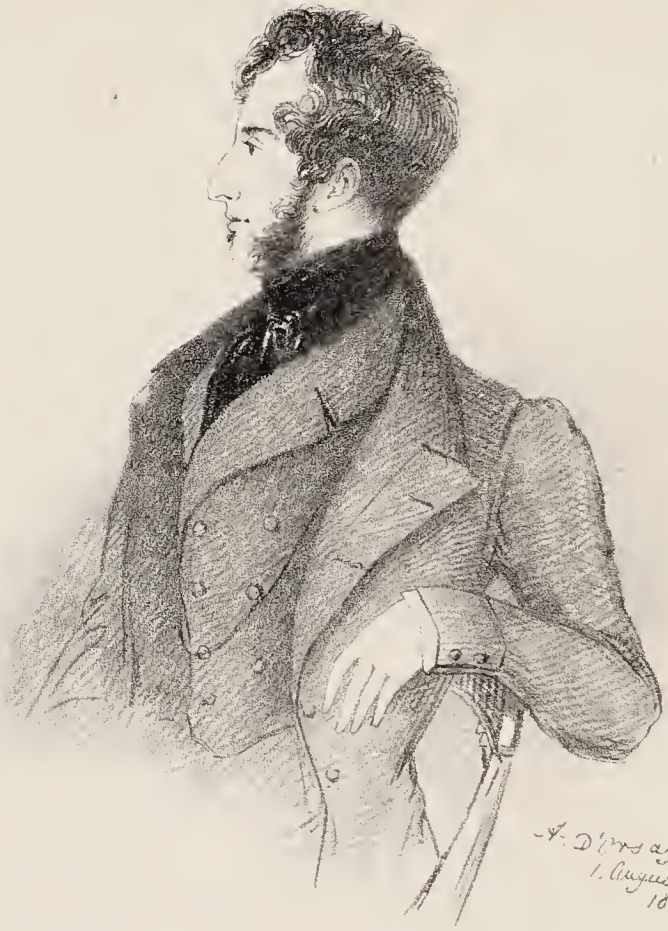
The

KNEBWORTH

EDITION

FALKLAND AND ZICCI.



Edward Lytton Bulwer

FALKLAND

AND

ZICCI

BY

THE RIGHT HON. LORD LYTTON

LONDON
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS
THE BROADWAY, LUDGATE
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PREFATORY NOTE TO THE KNEBWORTH EDITION.

"FALKLAND" is the earliest of Lord Lytton's prose fictions. Published before "Pelham," it was written in the boyhood of its illustrious author. In the maturity of his manhood and the fulness of his literary popularity he withdrew it from print. This is the first English edition of his collected works in which the tale reappears. It is because the morality of it was condemned by his experienced judgment, that the author of "Falkland" deliberately omitted it from each of the numerous reprints of his novels and romances which were published in England during his lifetime.

Messrs. Routledge therefore desire to state the motives which have induced them, with the consent of the author's son, to include "Falkland" in the present edition of his collected works.

In the first place, this work has been for many years, and still is, accessible to English readers in every country except England. The continental edition of it, published by Baron Tauchnitz, has a wide circulation; and, since for this reason the book cannot practically be withheld from the public, it is thought desirable that the publication of it should at least be accompanied by some record of the above-mentioned fact.

In the next place, the considerations which would naturally guide an author of established reputation in the selection of early compositions for subsequent republication, are obviously inapplicable to the preparation of a posthumous standard edition of his collected works. Those who read the tale of "Falkland" eight-and-forty

years ago * have long survived the age when character is influenced by the literature of sentiment. The readers to whom it is now presented are not Lord Lytton's contemporaries; they are his posterity. To them his works have already become classical. It is only upon the minds of the young that the works of sentiment have any appreciable moral influence. But the sentiment of each age is peculiar to itself; and the purely moral influence of sentimental fiction seldom survives the age to which it was first addressed. The youngest and most impressionable reader of such works as the "Nouvelle Helöise," "Werthe," "The Robbers," "Corinne," or "René," is not now likely to be morally influenced, for good or ill, by the perusal of those masterpieces of genius. Had Byron attained the age at which great authors most realise the responsibilities of fame and genius, he might possibly have regretted, and endeavoured to suppress, the publication of "Don Juan"; but the possession of that immortal poem is an unmixed benefit to posterity, and the loss of it would have been an irreparable misfortune.

"Falkland," although the earliest, is one of the most carefully finished of its author's compositions. All that was once turbid, heating, unwholesome in the current of sentiment which flows through this history of a guilty passion, "Death's immortalizing winter" has chilled and purified. The book is now a harmless, and it may be hoped, a not uninteresting, evidence of the precocity of its author's genius. As such, it is here reprinted, together with the fragmentary romance of "Zicci," which was originally contributed as a serial story to the *Monthly Chronicle*, in 1838. "Zicci" is the first rough sketch of a conception which Lord Lytton subsequently developed and completed under the title of "Zanoni."

* It was published in 1827.

FALKLAND.

BOOK I.

FROM ERASMUS FALKLAND, ESQ., TO THE HON. FREDERICK MONKTON.

L——, *May* —, 1822.

You are mistaken, my dear Monkton! Your description of the gaiety of "the season" gives me no emotion. You speak of pleasure; I remember no labour so wearisome: you enlarge upon its changes; no sameness appears to me so monotonous. Keep, then, your pity for those who require it. From the height of my philosophy I compassionate *you*. No one is so vain as a recluse; and your jests at my hermitship and hermitage cannot penetrate the folds of a self-conceit, which does not envy you in your suppers at D—— House, nor even in your waltzes with Eleanor ——.

It is a ruin rather than a house which I inhabit. I have not been at L—— since my return from abroad, and during those years the place has gone rapidly to decay; perhaps, for that reason, it suits me better, *tel maître telle maison*.

Of all my possessions this is the least valuable in itself, and derives the least interest from the associations of childhood, for it was not at L—— that any part of that period was spent. I have, however, chosen it for my present retreat, because here only I am personally unknown, and therefore little likely to be disturbed. I do not, indeed, wish for the interruptions designed as

civilities; I rather gather around myself, link after link, the chains that connected me with the world; I find among my own thoughts that variety and occupation which you only experience in your intercourse with others; and I make, like the Chinese, my map of the universe consist of a circle in a square—the circle is my own empire of thought *and self;* and it is to the scanty corners which it leaves without, that I banish whatever belongs to the remainder of mankind.

About a mile from L—— is Mr. Mandeville's beautiful villa of E——, in the midst of grounds which form a delightful contrast to the savage and wild scenery by which they are surrounded. As the house is at present quite deserted, I have obtained, through the gardener, a free admittance into his domains, and I pass there whole hours, indulging, like the hero of the *Lutrin,* "*une sainte oisiveté,*" listening to a little noisy brook, and letting my thoughts be almost as vague and idle as the birds which wander among the trees that surround me. I could wish, indeed, that this simile were in all things correct—that those thoughts, if as free, were also as happy as the objects of my comparison and could, like them, after the rovings of the day, turn at evening to a resting-place, and be still. We are the dupes and the victims of our senses: while we use them to gather from external things the hoards that we store within, we cannot foresee the punishments we prepare for ourselves; the remembrance which stings, and the hope which deceives, the passions which promise us rapture, which reward us with despair, and the thoughts which, if they constitute the healthful action, make also the feverish excitement of our minds. What sick man has not dreamt in his delirium everything that our philosophers have said? * But I am growing into my old

* Quid aegrotus unquam somniavit quod philosophorum aliquis non dixerit?—LACTANTIUS.

habit of gloomy reflection, and it is time that I should conclude. I meant to have written you a letter as light as your own; if I have failed, it is no wonder.—"Notre cœur est un instrument incomplet—une lyre où il manque des cordes, et où nous sommes forcés de rendre les accens de la joie, sur le ton consacré aux soupirs."

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

You ask me to give you some sketch of my life, and of that *bel mondo* which wearied me so soon. Men seldom reject an opportunity to talk of themselves; and I am not unwilling to re-examine the past, to re-connect it with the present, and to gather from a consideration of each what hopes and expectations are still left to me for the future.

But my detail must be rather of thought than of action: most of those whose fate has been connected with mine are now living, and I would not, even to you, break that tacit confidence which much of my history would require. After all, you will have no loss. The actions of another may interest—but, for the most part, it is only his reflections which come home to us; for few have acted, nearly all of us have thought.

My own vanity too would be unwilling to enter upon incidents which had their origin either in folly or in error. It is true that those follies and errors have ceased, but their effects remain. With years our *faults* diminish, but our *vices* increase.

You know that my mother was Spanish, and that my father was one of that old race of which so few scions remain, who, living in a distant country, have been little influenced by the changes of fashion, and, priding themselves on the antiquity of their names, have looked with contempt upon the modern distinctions and the mushroom nobles which have sprung up to discountenance

and eclipse the plainness of more venerable and solid respectability. In his youth my father had served in the army. He had known much of men and more of books; but his knowledge, instead of rooting out, had rather been engrafted on his prejudices. He was one of that class (and I say it with a private reverence, though a public regret), who, with the best intentions, have made the worst citizens, and who think it a duty to perpetuate whatever is pernicious by having learnt to consider it as sacred. He was a great country gentleman, a great sportsman, and a great Tory; perhaps the three worst enemies which a country can have. Though beneficent to the poor, he gave but a cold reception to the rich; for he was too refined to associate with his inferiors, and too proud to like the competition of his equals. One ball and two dinners a-year constituted all the aristocratic portion of our hospitality, and at the age of twelve, the noblest and youngest companions that I possessed, were a large Danish dog and a wild mountain pony, as unbroken and as lawless as myself. It is only in later years that we can perceive the immeasurable importance of the early scenes and circumstances which surrounded us. It was in the loneliness of my unchecked wanderings that my early affection for my own thoughts was conceived. In the seclusion of Nature—in whatever court she presided—the education of my mind was begun; and, even at that early age, I rejoiced (like the wild hart the Grecian poet* has described) in the stillness of the great woods, and the solitudes unbroken by human footstep.

The first change in my life was under melancholy auspices; my father fell suddenly ill, and died; and my mother, whose very existence seemed only held in his presence, followed him in three months. I remember

* Eurip. Bacchae, l. 874.

that, a few hours before her death, she called me to her: she reminded me that, through her, I was of Spanish extraction; that in her country I received my birth, and that, not the less for its degradation and distress, I might hereafter find in the relations which I held to it a remembrance to value, or even a duty to fulfil. On her tenderness to me at that hour, on the impression it made upon my mind, and on the keen and enduring sorrow which I felt for months after her death, it would be useless to dwell.

My uncle became my guardian. He is, you know, a member of parliament of some reputation; very sensible and very dull; very much respected by men, very much disliked by women; and inspiring all children, of either sex, with the same unmitigated aversion which he feels for them himself.

I did not remain long under his immediate care. I was soon sent to school—that preparatory world, where the great primal principles of human nature, in the aggression of the strong and the meanness of the weak, constitute the earliest lesson of importance that we are taught; and where the forced *primitiæ* of that less universal knowledge which is useless to the many who, in after life, neglect, and bitter to the few who improve it, are the first motives for which our minds are to be broken to terror, and our hearts initiated into tears.

Bold and resolute by temper, I soon carved myself a sort of career among my associates. A hatred to all oppression, and a haughty and unyielding character, made me at once the fear and aversion of the greater powers and principalities of the school; while my agility at all boyish games, and my ready assistance or protection to every one who required it, made me proportionally popular with, and courted by, the humbler multitude of the subordinate classes. I was constantly surrounded by the most lawless and mischievous fol-

lowers whom the school could afford; all eager for my commands, and all pledged to their execution.

In good truth, I was a worthy Rowland of such a gang: though I excelled in, I cared little for, the ordinary amusements of the school: I was fonder of engaging in marauding expeditions contrary to our legislative restrictions, and I valued myself equally upon my boldness in planning our exploits, and my dexterity in eluding their discovery. But exactly in proportion as our school terms connected me with those of my own years, did our vacations unfit me for any intimate companionship but that which I already began to discover in myself.

Twice in the year, when I went home, it was to that wild and romantic part of the country where my former childhood had been spent. There, alone and unchecked, I was thrown utterly upon my own resources. I wandered by day over the rude scenes which surrounded us; and at evening I pored, with an unwearied delight, over the ancient legends which made those scenes sacred to my imagination. I grew by degrees of a more thoughtful and visionary nature. My temper imbibed the romance of my studies; and whether, in winter, basking by the large hearth of our old hall, or stretched, in the indolent voluptuousness of summer, by the rushing streams which formed the chief characteristic of the country around us, my hours were equally wasted in those dim and luxurious dreams, which constituted, perhaps, the essence of that poetry I had not the genius to embody. It was then, by that alternate restlessness of action and idleness of reflection, into which my young years were divided, that the impress of my character was stamped: that fitfulness of temper, that affection for extremes has accompanied me through life. Hence, not only all intermediums of emotion appear to me as tame, but even the most overwrought excitation can

bring neither novelty nor zest. I have, as it were, feasted upon the passions; I have made that my daily food, which, in its strength and excess, would have been poison to others; I have rendered my mind unable to enjoy the ordinary aliments of nature; and I have wasted, by a premature indulgence, my resources and my powers, till I have left my heart, without a remedy or a hope, to whatever disorders its own intemperance has engendered.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

When I left Dr. ——'s, I was sent to a private tutor in D——e. Here I continued for about two years. It was during that time that—but what *then* befel me is for no living ear! The characters of that history are engraven on my heart in letters of fire; but it is a language that none but myself have the authority to read. It is enough for the purpose of my confessions that the events of that period were connected with the first awakening of the most powerful of human passions, and that, whatever their commencement, their end was despair! and *she*—the object of that love—the only being in the world who ever possessed the secret and the spell of my nature—*her* life was the bitterness and the fever of a troubled heart,—her rest is the grave—

> Non la conobbe il mondo mentre l'ebbe
> Con ibill 'io, ch 'a pianger qui rimasi.

That attachment was not so much a single event, as the first link in a long chain which was coiled around my heart. It were a tedious and bitter history, even were it permitted, to tell you of all the sins and misfortunes to which in after-life that passion was connected. I will only speak of the more hidden but general effect it had upon my mind; though, indeed, naturally inclined to a morbid and melancholy philoso-

phy, it is more than probable, but for that occurrence, that it would never have found matter for excitement. Thrown early among mankind, I should early have imbibed their feelings, and grown like them by the influence of custom. I should not have carried within me one unceasing remembrance, which was to teach me, like Faustus, to find nothing in knowledge but its inutility, or in hope but its deceit; and to bear like him, through the blessings of youth and the allurements of pleasure, the curse and the presence of a fiend.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

It was after the first violent grief produced by that train of circumstances to which I must necessarily so darkly allude, that I began to apply with earnestness to books. Night and day I devoted myself unceasingly to study, and from this fit I was only recovered by the long and dangerous illness it produced. Alas! there is no fool like him who wishes for knowledge! It is only through woe that we are taught to reflect, and we gather the honey of worldly wisdom, not from flowers, but thorns.

"Une grande passion malheureuse est un grand moyen de sagesse." From the moment in which the buoyancy of my spirit was first broken by real anguish, the losses of the *heart* were repaired by the experience of the *mind*. I passed at once, like Melmoth, from youth to age. What were any longer to me the ordinary avocations of my contemporaries? I had exhausted years in moments —I had wasted, like the Eastern Queen, my richest jewel in a draught. I ceased to hope, to feel, to act, to burn: such are the impulses of the young! I learned to doubt, to reason, to analyze: such are the habits of the old! From that time, if I have not avoided the pleasures of life, I have not enjoyed them. Women, wine, the society

of the gay, the commune of the wise, the lonely pursuit of knowledge, the daring visions of ambition, all have occupied me in turn, and all alike have deceived me; but, like the Widow in the story of Voltaire, I have built at last a temple to "Time, the Comforter:" I have grown calm and unrepining with years; and, if I am now shrinking from men, I have derived at least this advantage from the loneliness first made habitual by regret;—that while I feel increased benevolence to others, I have learned to look for happiness only in myself.

They alone are independent of Fortune who have made themselves a separate existence from the world.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

I went to the University with a great fund of general reading, and habits of constant application. My uncle, who having no children of his own, began to be ambitious for me, formed great expectations of my career at Oxford. I staid there three years, and did nothing! I did not gain a single prize, nor did I attempt any thing above the ordinary degree. The fact is, that nothing seemed to me worth the labour of success. I conversed with those who had obtained the highest academical reputation, and I smiled with a consciousness of superiority at the boundlessness of their vanity, and the narrowness of their views. The limits of the distinction they had gained seemed to them as wide as the most extended renown; and the little knowledge their youth had acquired only appeared to them an excuse for the ignorance and the indolence of maturer years. Was it to equal these that I was to labour? I felt that I already surpassed them! Was it to gain *their* good opinion, or, still worse, that of their admirers? Alas! I had too long learned to live for myself to find any happiness in the respect of the idlers I despised.

I left Oxford at the age of twenty-one. I succeeded to the large estates of my inheritance, and for the first time I felt the vanity so natural to youth when I went up to London to enjoy the resources of the Capital, and to display the powers I possessed to revel in whatever those resources could yield. I found society like the Jewish temple: any one is admitted into its threshold; none but the chiefs of the institution into its recesses.

Young, rich, of an ancient and honourable name, pursuing pleasure rather as a necessary excitement than an occasional occupation, and agreeable to the associates I drew around me because my profusion contributed to their enjoyment, and my temper to their amusement—I found myself courted by many, and avoided by none. I soon discovered that all civility is but the mask of design. I smiled at the kindness of the fathers who, hearing that I was talented, and knowing that I was rich, looked to my support in whatever political side they had espoused. I saw in the notes of the mothers their anxiety for the establishment of their daughters, and their respect for my acres; and in the cordiality of the sons who had horses to sell and rouge-et-noir debts to pay, I detected all that veneration for my money which implied such contempt for its possessor. By nature observant, and by misfortune sarcastic, I looked upon the various colourings of society with a searching and philosophic eye: I unravelled the intricacies which knit servility with arrogance, and meanness with ostentation; and I traced to its sources that universal vulgarity of inward sentiment and external manner, which, in all classes, appears to me to constitute the only unvarying characteristic of our countrymen. In proportion as I increased my knowledge of others, I shrunk with a deeper disappointment and dejection into my own resources. The first moment of real happiness which I experienced for a whole year was when I found myself

about to seek, beneath the influence of other skies, that more extended acquaintance with my species which might either draw me to them with a closer connexion, or at least reconcile me to the ties which already existed.

I will not dwell upon my adventures abroad: there is little to interest others in a recital which awakens no interest in one's self. I sought for wisdom, and I acquired but knowledge. I thirsted for the truth, the tenderness of love, and I found but its fever and its falsehood. Like the two Florimels of Spenser, I mistook, in my delirium, the delusive fabrication of the senses for the divine reality of the heart; and I only awoke from my deceit when the phantom I had worshipped melted into snow. Whatever I pursued partook of the energy, yet fitfulness of my nature; mingling to-day in the tumults of the city, and to-morrow alone with my own heart in the solitude of unpeopled nature; now revelling in the wildest excesses, and now tracing, with a painful and unwearied search, the intricacies of science; alternately governing others, and subdued by the tyranny which my own passions imposed—I passed through the ordeal unshrinking yet unscathed. "The education of life," says De Staël, "perfects the thinking mind, but depraves the frivolous." I do not inquire, Monkton, to which of these classes I belong; but I feel too well, that though my mind has not been depraved, it has found no perfection but in misfortune; and that whatever be the acquirements of later years, they have nothing which can compensate for the losses of our youth.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

I RETURNED to England. I entered again upon the theatre of its world; but I mixed now more in its

greater than its lesser pursuits. I looked rather at the mass than the leaven of mankind; and while I felt aversion for the few whom I knew, I glowed with philanthropy for the crowd which I know not.

It is in contemplating men at a distance that we become benevolent. When we mix with them, we suffer by the contact, and grow, if not malicious from the injury, at least selfish from the circumspection which our safety imposes: but when, while we feel our relationship, we are not galled by the tie; when neither jealousy, nor envy, nor resentment are excited, we have nothing to interfere with those more complacent and kindliest sentiments which our earliest impressions have rendered natural to our hearts. We may fly men in hatred because they have galled us, but the feeling ceases with the cause: none will willingly feed long upon bitter thoughts. It is thus that, while in the narrow circle in which we move we suffer daily from those who approach us, we can, in spite of our resentment to *them*, glow with a general benevolence to the wider relations from which we are remote; that while smarting beneath the treachery of friendship, the sting of ingratitude, the faithlessness of love, we would almost sacrifice our lives to realize some idolized theory of legislation; and that, distrustful, calculating, selfish in private, there are thousands who would, with a credulous fanaticism, fling themselves as victims before that unrecompensing Moloch which they term the Public.

Living, then, much by myself, but reflecting much upon the world, I learned to love mankind. Philanthropy brought ambition; for I was ambitious, not for my own aggrandizement, but for the service of others—for the poor—the toiling—the degraded; these constituted that part of my fellow beings which I the most loved, for these were bound to me by the most engaging of all human ties—misfortune! I began to enter into the

intrigues of the state; I extended my observation and inquiry from individuals to nations; I examined into the mysteries of the science which has arisen in these later days to give the lie to the wisdom of the past, to reduce into the simplicity of problems the intricacies of political knowledge, to teach us the fallacy of the system which had governed by restriction, and imagined that the happiness of nations depended upon the perpetual interference of its rulers, and to prove to us that the only unerring policy of art is to leave a free and unobstructed progress to the hidden energies and providence of Nature. But it was not only the *theoretical* investigation of the state which employed me. I mixed, though in secret, with the agents of its springs. While I seemed only intent upon pleasure, I locked in my heart the consciousness and vanity of power. In the levity of the lip I disguised the workings and the knowledge of the brain; and I looked, as with a gifted eye, upon the mysteries of the hidden depths, while I seemed to float an idler, with the herd, only on the surface of the stream.

Why was I disgusted, when I had but to put forth my hand and grasp whatever object my ambition might desire? Alas! there was in my heart always something too soft for the aims and cravings of my mind. I felt that I was wasting the young years of my life in a barren and wearisome pursuit. What to me, who had outlived vanity, would have been the admiration of the crowd! I sighed for the sympathy of *the one!* and I shrunk in sadness from the prospect of renown to ask my heart for the reality of love! For what purpose, too, had I devoted myself to the service of men? As I grew more sensible of the labour of pursuing, I saw more of the inutility of accomplishing, individual measures. There is one great and moving order of events which we may retard, but we cannot arrest, and to

which, if we endeavour to hasten them, we only give a dangerous and unnatural impetus. Often, when in the fever of the midnight, I have paused from my unshared and unsoftened studies, to listen to the deadly pulsation of my heart,* when I have felt in its painful and tumultuous beating the very life waning and wasting within me, I have sickened to my inmost soul to remember that, amongst all those whom I was exhausting the health and enjoyment of youth to benefit, there was not one for whom my life had an interest, or by whom my death would be honoured by a tear. There is a beautiful passage in Chalmers on the want of sympathy we experience in the world. From my earliest childhood I had one deep, engrossing, yearning desire,—and that was to love and to be loved. I found, too young, the realization of that dream—it passed! and I have never known it again. The experience of long and bitter years teaches me to look with suspicion on that far recollection of the past, and to doubt if this earth could indeed produce a living form to satisfy the visions of one who has dwelt among the boyish creations of fancy —who has shaped out in his heart an imaginary idol, arrayed it in whatever is most beautiful in nature, and breathed into the image the pure but burning spirit of that innate love from which it sprung! It is true that my manhood has been the undeceiver of my youth, and that the meditation upon facts has disenthralled me from the visionary broodings over fiction; but what remuneration have I found in reality? If the line of the satirist be not true,

"Souvent de tous nos maux la raison est le pire."†

at least, like the madman of whom he speaks, I owe but

* Falkland suffered much, from very early youth, from a complaint in his heart.

† Boileau.

little gratitude to the act which, "in drawing me from my error, has robbed me also of a paradise."

I am approaching the conclusion of my confessions. Men who have no ties in the world, and who have been accustomed to solitude, find, with every disappointment in the former, a greater yearning for the enjoyments which the latter can afford. Day by day I relapsed more into myself; "man delighted me not, nor woman either." In my ambition, it was not in the means, but the end, that I was disappointed. In my friends, I complained not of treachery, but insipidity; and it was not because I was deserted, but wearied by more tender connexions, that I ceased to find either excitement in seeking, or triumph in obtaining, their love. It was not, then, in a momentary disgust, but rather in the calm of satiety, that I formed that resolution of retirement which I have adopted now.

Shrinking from my kind, but too young to live wholly for myself, I have made a new tie with nature; I have come to cement it here. I am like a bird which has wandered afar, but has returned home to its nest at last. But there is one feeling which had its origin in the world, and which accompanies me still; which consecrates my recollections of the past; which contributes to take its gloom from the solitude of the present:—Do you ask me its nature, Monkton? It is my friendship for you.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

I wish that I could convey to you, dear Monkton, the faintest idea of the pleasures of indolence. You belong to that class which is of all the most busy, though the least active. Men of pleasure never have time for any thing. No lawyer, no statesman, no bustling, hurrying, restless underling of the counter or the Exchange,

is so eternally occupied as a lounger "about town." He is linked to labour by a series of undefinable nothings. His independence and idleness only serve to fetter and engross him, and his leisure seems held upon the condition of never having a moment to himself. Would that you could see me at this instant in the luxury of my summer retreat, surrounded by the trees, the waters, the wild birds, and the hum, the glow, the exultation which teem visibly and audibly through creation in the noon of a summer's day! I am undisturbed by a single intruder. I am unoccupied by a single pursuit. I suffer one moment to glide into another, without the remembrance that the next must be filled up by some laborious pleasure, or some wearisome enjoyment. It is here that I feel all the powers, and gather together all the resources of my mind. I recall my recollections of men; and, unbiassed by the passions and prejudices which we do not experience *alone*, because their very existence depends upon others, I endeavour to perfect my knowledge of the human heart. He who would acquire that better science must arrange and analyse in private the experience he has collected in the crowd. Alas, Monkton, when you have expressed surprise at the gloom which is so habitual to my temper, did it never occur to you that my acquaintance with the world would alone be sufficient to account for it?—that knowledge is neither for the good nor the happy. Who can touch pitch, and not be defiled? Who can look upon the workings of grief and rejoice, or associate with guilt and be pure?

It has been by mingling with men, not only in their *haunts* but their *emotions*, that I have learned to know them. I have descended into the receptacles of vice; I have taken lessons from the brothel and the hell; I have watched feeling in its unguarded sallies, and drawn from the impulse of the moment conclusions which gave the

lie to the previous conduct of years. But all knowledge brings us disappointment, and *this* knowledge the most —the satiety of good, the suspicion of evil, the decay of our young dreams, the premature iciness of age, the reckless, aimless, joyless indifference which follows an overwrought and feverish excitation—*These* constitute the lot of men who have renounced *hope* in the acquisition of *thought*, and who, in learning the motives of human actions, learn only to despise the persons and the things which enchanted them like divinities before.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

I told you, dear Monkton, in my first letter, of my favourite retreat in Mr. Mandeville's grounds. I have grown so attached to it, that I spend the greater part of the day there. I am not one of those persons who always perambulate with a book in their hands, as if neither nature nor their own reflections could afford them any rational amusement. I go there more frequently *en paresseux* than *en savant:* a small brooklet which runs through the grounds broadens at last into a deep, clear, transparent lake. Here fir and elm and oak fling their branches over the margin; and beneath their shade I pass all the hours of noon-day in the luxuries of a dreamer's reverie. It is true, however, that I am never less idle than when I appear the most so. I am like Prospero in his desert island, and surround myself with spirits. A spell trembles upon the leaves; every wave comes fraught to me with its peculiar music: and an Ariel seems to whisper the secrets of every breeze, which comes to my forehead laden with the perfumes of the West. But do not think, Monkton, that it is only good spirits which haunt the recesses of my solitude. To push the metaphor to exaggeration—Memory is my

Sycorax, and Gloom is the Caliban she conceives. But let me digress from myself to my less idle occupations; —I have of late diverted my thoughts in some measure by a recurrence to a study to which I once was particularly devoted—history. Have you ever remarked, that people who live the most by themselves reflect the most upon others; and that he who lives surrounded by the million never thinks of any but the one individual —himself? Philosophers—moralists—historians, whose thoughts, labours, lives, have been devoted to the consideration of mankind, or the analysis of public events, have usually been remarkably attached to solitude and seclusion. We are indeed so linked to our fellow-beings, that, where we are not chained to them by action, we are carried to and connected with them by thought.

I have just quitted the observations of my favourite Bolingbroke upon history. I cannot agree with him as to its utility. The more I consider, the more I am convinced that its study has been upon the whole pernicious to mankind. It is by those details, which are always as unfair in their inference as they must evidently be doubtful in their facts, that party animosity and general prejudice are supported and sustained. There is not one abuse—one intolerance—one remnant of ancient barbarity and ignorance existing at the present day, which is not advocated, and actually confirmed by some vague deduction from the bigotry of an illiterate chronicler, or the obscurity of an uncertain legend. It is through the constant appeal to our ancestors that we transmit wretchedness and wrong to our posterity: we should require, to corroborate an evil originating in the present day, the clearest and most satisfactory proof; but the minutest defence is sufficient for an evil handed down to us by the barbarism of antiquity. We reason from what even in old times was dubious, as if

we were adducing what was certain in those in which we live. And thus we have made no sanction to abuses so powerful as history, and no enemy to the present like the past.

FROM THE LADY EMILY MANDEVILLE TO MRS. ST. JOHN.

At last, my dear Julia, I am settled in my beautiful retreat. Mrs. Dalton and Lady Margaret Leslie are all whom I could prevail upon to accompany me. Mr. Mandeville is full of the corn-laws. He is chosen chairman to a select committee in the House. He is murmuring agricultural distresses in his sleep; and when I asked him occasionally to come down here to see me, he started from a reverie, and exclaimed—"Never, Mr. Speaker, as a landed proprietor; never will I consent to my own ruin."

My boy, my own, my beautiful companion, is with me. I wish you could see how fast he can run, and how sensibly he can talk. "What a fine figure he has for his age!" said I to Mr. Mandeville the other day. "Figure! age!" said his father; "in the House of Commons he shall make a figure to every age." I know that in writing to you, you will not be contented if I do not say a great deal about myself. I shall therefore proceed to tell you, that I feel already much better from the air and exercise of the journey, from the conversation of my two guests, and, above all, from the constant society of my dear boy. He was three last birthday. I think that at the age of twenty-one, I am the least childish of the two. Pray remember me to all in town who have not quite forgotten me. Beg Lady —— to send Elizabeth a subscription ticket for Almack's, and —oh, talking of Almack's, I think my boy's eyes are even more blue and beautiful than Lady C——'s.

Adieu, my dear Julia,

Ever, &c.,

E. M.

Lady Emily Mandeville was the daughter of the Duke of Lindvale. She married, at the age of sixteen, a man of large fortune, and some parliamentary reputation. Neither in person nor in character was he much beneath or above the ordinary standard of men. He was one of Nature's Macadamized achievements. His great fault was his equality; and you longed for a hill though it were to climb, or a stone though it were in your way. Love attaches itself to something prominent, even if that something be what others would hate. One can scarcely feel extremes for mediocrity. The few years Lady Emily had been married had but little altered her character. Quick in feeling, though regulated in temper; gay, less from levity, than from that first *spring-tide* of a heart which has never yet known occasion to be sad; beautiful and pure, as an enthusiast's dream of heaven, yet bearing within the latent and powerful passion and tenderness of earth: she mixed with all a simplicity and innocence which the extreme earliness of her marriage, and the ascetic temper of her husband, had tended less to diminish than increase. She had much of what is termed genius—its warmth of emotion—its vividness of conception—its admiration for the grand—its affection for the good, and that dangerous contempt for whatever is mean and worthless, the very indulgence of which is an offence against the habits of the world. Her tastes, were, however, too feminine and chaste ever to render her eccentric: they were rather calculated to conceal than to publish the deeper recesses of her nature; and it was beneath that polished surface of manner common to those with whom she mixed, that she hid the treasures of a mine which no human eye had beheld.

Her health, naturally delicate, had lately suffered much from the dissipation of London, and it was by the advice of her physicians that she had now come to spend the

summer at E——. Lady Margaret Leslie, who was old enough to be tired with the caprices of society, and Mrs. Dalton, who having just lost her husband, was forbidden at present to partake of its amusements, had agreed to accompany her to her retreat. Neither of them was perhaps much suited to Emily's temper, but youth and spirits make almost any one congenial to us: it is from the years which confirm our habits, and the reflections which refine our taste, that it becomes easy to revolt us, and difficult to please.

On the third day after Emily's arrival at E——, she was sitting after breakfast with Lady Margaret and Mrs. Dalton. "Pray," said the former, did you ever meet my relation, Mr. Falkland? he is in your immediate neighbourhood." "Never; though I have a great curiosity: that fine old ruin beyond the village belongs to him, I believe." "It does. You ought to know him: you would like him so!" "Like him!" repeated Mrs. Dalton, who was one of those persons of *ton* who, though everything collectively, are nothing individually: "Like him? impossible!" "Why?" said Lady Margaret, indignantly—"he has every requisite to please—youth, talent, fascination of manner, and great knowledge of the world." "Well," said Mrs. Dalton, "I cannot say I discovered his perfections. He seemed to me conceited and satirical, and—and—in short, very disagreeable; *but then, to be sure, I have only seen him once.*" "I have heard many accounts of him," said Emily, "all differing from each other: I think, however, that the generality of people rather incline to Mrs. Dalton's opinion than to yours, Lady Margaret." "I can easily believe it. It is very seldom that he takes the trouble to please; but when he does, he is irresistible. Very little, however, is generally known respecting him. Since he came of age, he has been much abroad; and when in England, he never entered with eagerness into

society. He is supposed to possess very extraordinary powers, which, added to his large fortune and ancient name, have procured him a consideration and rank rarely enjoyed by one so young. He had refused repeated offers to enter into public life; but he is very intimate with one of the ministers, who, it is said, has had the address to profit much by his abilities. All other particulars concerning him are extremely uncertain. Of his person and manners you had better judge yourself; for I am sure, Emily, that my petition for inviting him here is already granted." "By all means," said Emily: "you cannot be more anxious to see him than I am." And so the conversation dropped. Lady Margaret went to the library; Mrs. Dalton seated herself on the ottoman, dividing her attention between the last novel and her Italian greyhound; and Emily left the room in order to revisit her former and favourite haunts. Her young son was her companion, and she was not sorry that he was her only one. To be the instructress of an infant, a mother should be its playmate; and Emily was, perhaps, wiser than she imagined, when she ran with a laughing eye and a light foot over the grass, occupying herself almost with the same earnestness as her child in the same infantine amusements. As they passed the wood which led to the lake at the bottom of the grounds, the boy, who was before Emily, suddenly stopped. She came hastily up to him; and scarcely two paces before, though half hid by the steep bank of the lake beneath which he reclined, she saw a man apparently asleep. A volume of Shakespeare lay beside him: the child had seized it. As she took it from him in order to replace it, her eye rested upon the passage the boy had accidentally opened. How often in after days was that passage recalled as an omen! It was the following:—

Ah me! for aught that ever I could read,
Could ever hear by tale or history—
The course of true love never did run smooth!
Midsummer Night's Dream.

As she laid the book gently down she caught a glimpse of the countenance of the sleeper: never did she forget the expression which it wore,—stern, proud, mournful even in repose!

She did not wait for him to awake. She hurried home through the trees. All that day she was silent and abstracted; the face haunted her like a dream. Strange as it may seem, she spoke neither to Lady Margaret nor to Mrs. Dalton of her adventure. *Why?* Is there in our hearts any prescience of their misfortunes?

On the next day, Falkland, who had received and accepted Lady Margaret's invitation, was expected to dinner. Emily felt a strong yet excusable curiosity to see one of whom she had heard so many and such contradictory reports. She was alone in the saloon when he entered. At the first glance she recognised the person she had met by the lake on the day before, and she blushed deeply as she replied to his salutation. To her great relief Lady Margaret and Mrs. Dalton entered in a few minutes, and the conversation grew general.

Falkland had but little of what is called animation in manner; but his wit, though it rarely led to mirth, was sarcastic, yet refined, and the vividness of his imagination threw a brilliancy and originality over remarks which in others might have been commonplace and tame.

The conversation turned chiefly upon society; and though Lady Margaret had told her he had entered but little into its ordinary routine, Emily was struck alike by his accurate acquaintance with men, and the justice of his reflections upon manners. There also mingled with his satire an occasional melancholy of feeling, which appeared to Emily the more touching because it

was always unexpected and unassumed. It was after one of these remarks, that for the first time she ventured to examine into the charm and peculiarity of the countenance of the speaker. There was spread over it that expression of mingled energy and languor, which betokens that much, whether of thought, sorrow, passion, or action, has been undergone, but resisted: has wearied, but not subdued. In the broad and noble brow, in the chiselled lip, and the melancholy depths of the calm and thoughtful eye, there sat a resolution and a power, which, though mournful, were not without their pride; which, if they had borne the worst, had also defied it. Notwithstanding his mother's country, his complexion was fair and pale; and his hair, of a light chestnut, fell in large *antique* curls over his forehead. That forehead, indeed, constituted the principal feature of his countenance. It was neither in its height nor expansion alone that its remarkable beauty consisted; but if ever thought to conceive and courage to execute high designs were embodied and visible, they were imprinted *there*.

Falkland did not stay long after dinner; but to Lady Margaret he promised all that she required of future length and frequency in his visits. When he left the room, Lady Emily went instinctively to the window to watch him depart; and all that night his low soft voice rung in her ear, like the music of an indistinct and half-remembered dream.

FROM MR. MANDEVILLE TO LADY EMILY.

Dear Emily,—Business of great importance to the country has prevented my writing to you before. I hope you have continued well since I heard from you last, and that you do all you can to preserve that retrenchment of unnecessary expenses, and observe that

attention to a prudent economy, which is no less incumbent upon individuals than nations.

Thinking that you must be dull at E——, and ever anxious both to entertain and to improve you, I send you an excellent publication by Mr. Tooke,* together with my own two last speeches, corrected by myself.

Trusting to hear from you soon, I am, with best love to Henry,

Very affectionately yours,

JOHN MANDEVILLE.

FROM ERASMUS FALKLAND, ESQ. TO THE HON. FREDERICK MONKTON.†

Well, Monkton, I have been to E——; that important event in my monastic life has been concluded. Lady Margaret was as talkative as usual; and a Mrs. Dalton, who, I find, is an acquaintance of yours, asked very tenderly after your poodle and yourself. But Lady Emily! Ay, Monkton, I know not well how to describe *her* to you. Her beauty interests not less than it dazzles. There is that deep and eloquent softness in her every word and action, which, of all charms, is the most dangerous. Yet she is rather of a playful than of the melancholy and pensive nature which generally accompanies such gentleness of manner; but there is no levity in her character; nor is that playfulness of spirit ever carried into the exhilaration of what we call "mirth." She seems, if I may use the antithesis, at once too feeling to be gay, and too innocent to be sad. I remember having frequently met her husband. Cold and pompous, without anything to interest the imagination, or engage the affections, I am not able to conceive a person less

* The Political Economist.

† A letter from Falkland, mentioning Lady Margaret's invitation, has been omitted.

congenial to his beautiful and romantic wife. But she must have been exceedingly young when she married him; and she, probably, knows not yet that she is to be pitied, because she has not yet learned that she can love.

> Le veggio in fronte amor come in suo seggio
> Sul crin, negli occhi—su le labra amore
> Sol d'intorno al suo cuore amor non veggio.

I have been twice to her house since my first admission there. I love to listen to that soft and enchanting voice, and to escape from the gloom of my own reflections to the brightness, yet simplicity, of hers. In my earlier days this comfort would have been attended with danger; but we grow callous from the excess of feeling. We cannot re-illumine ashes! I can gaze upon her dream-like beauty, and not experience a single desire which can sully the purity of my worship. I listen to her voice when it melts in endearment over her birds, her flowers, or, in a deeper devotion, over her child; but my heart does not thrill at the tenderness of the sound. I touch her hand, and the pulses of my own are as calm as before. Satiety of the past is our best safeguard from the temptations of the future; and the perils of youth are over when it has acquired that dulness and apathy of affection which should belong only to the insensibility of age.

Such were Falkland's opinions at the time he wrote. Ah! what is so delusive as our affections? Our security is our danger—our defiance our defeat! Day after day he went to E——. He passed the mornings in making excursions with Emily over that wild and romantic country by which they were surrounded; and in the dangerous but delicious stillness of the summer twilights, they listened to the first whispers of their hearts.

In his relationship to Lady Margaret, Falkland found

his excuse for the frequency of his visits; and even Mrs. Dalton was so charmed with the fascination of his manner, that (in spite of her previous dislike) she forgot to inquire how far his intimacy at E—— was at variance with the proprieties of the world she worshipped, or in what proportion it was connected with herself.

It is needless for me to trace through all its windings the formation of that affection, the subsequent records of which I am about to relate. What is so unearthly, so beautiful, as the first birth of a woman's love? The air of heaven is not purer in its wanderings—its sunshine not more holy in its warmth. Oh! why should it deteriorate in its nature, even while it increases in its degree? Why should the step which *prints*, *sully* also the snow? How often, when Falkland met that guiltless yet thrilling eye, which revealed to him those internal secrets that Emily was yet awhile too happy to discover; when, like a fountain among flowers, the goodness of her heart flowed over the softness of her manner to those around her, and the benevolence of her actions to those beneath; how often he turned away with a veneration too deep for the selfishness of human passion, and a tenderness too sacred for its desires! It was in this temper (the earliest and the most fruitless prognostic of real love) that the following letter was written:—

FROM ERASMUS FALKLAND, ESQ., TO THE HON. FREDERICK MONKTON.

I have had two or three admonitory letters from my uncle. "The summer (he says) is advancing, yet you remain stationary in your indolence. There is still a great part of Europe which you have not seen; and since you will neither enter society for a wife, nor the House of Commons for fame, spend your life, at least while it is yet free and unshackled, in those active pur

suits which will render idleness hereafter more sweet; or in that observation and enjoyment among others, which will increase your resources in yourself." All this sounds well; but I have already acquired more knowledge than will be of use either to others or myself, and I am not willing to lose *tranquillity* here for the chance of obtaining *pleasure* elsewhere. Pleasure is indeed a holiday sensation which does not occur in ordinary life. We lose the peace of years when we hunt after the rapture of moments.

I do not know if you ever felt that existence was ebbing away without being put to its full value: as for me, I am never conscious of life without being also conscious that it is not enjoyed to the utmost. This is a bitter feeling, and its worst bitterness is our ignorance how to remove it. My indolence I neither seek nor wish to defend, yet it is rather from necessity than choice: it seems to me that there is nothing in the world to arouse me. I only ask for action, but I can find no motive sufficient to excite it: let me then, in my indolence, not, like the world, be idle, yet dependent on others; but at least dignify the failing by some appearance of that freedom which retirement only can bestow.

My seclusion is no longer solitude; yet I do not value it the less. I spend a great portion of my time at E——. Loneliness is attractive to men of reflection, not so much because they like their own thoughts, as because they dislike the thoughts of others. Solitude ceases to charm the moment we can find a single being whose ideas are more agreeable to us than our own. I have not, I think, yet described to you the person of Lady Emily. She is tall, and slightly, yet beautifully, formed. The ill health which obliged her to leave London for E——, in the height of the season, has given her cheek a more delicate hue than I should think it naturally wore. Her eyes are light, but their lashes are long and dark;

her hair is black and luxuriant, and worn in a fashion peculiar to herself; but her manners, Monkton! how can I convey to you their fascination? so simple, and therefore so faultless—so modest, and yet so tender—she seems, in acquiring the intelligence of the woman, to have only perfected the purity of the child; and now, after all that I have said, I am only more deeply sensible of the truth of Bacon's observation, that "the best part of beauty is that which no picture can express." I am loth to finish this description, because it seems to me scarcely begun; I am unwilling to continue it, because every word seems to show me more clearly those recesses of my heart, which I would have hidden even from myself. I do not *yet* love, it is true, for the time is past when I was lightly moved to passion; but I will not incur that danger, the probability of which I am seer enough to foresee. Never shall that pure and innocent heart be sullied by one who would die to shield it from the lightest misfortune. I find in myself a powerful seconder to my uncle's wishes. I shall be in London next week; till then, farewell.

E. F.

When the proverb said, that "Jove laughs at lovers' vows," it meant not (as in the ordinary construction) a sarcasm on their insincerity, but *inconsistency*. We deceive others far less than we deceive ourselves. What to Falkland were resolutions which a word, a glance, could overthrow? In the world he might have dissipated his thoughts: in loneliness he concentred them; for the passions are like the sounds of Nature, only heard in her solitude! He lulled his soul to the reproaches of his conscience; he surrendered himself to the intoxication of so golden a dream; and amidst those beautiful scenes there arose, as an offering to the summer heaven, the incense of two hearts which had, through

those very fires so guilty in themselves, purified and ennobled every other emotion they had conceived.

> God made the country, and man made the town,

says the hackneyed quotation; and the feelings awakened in each, differ with the genius of the place. Who can compare the frittered and divided affections formed in cities with that which crowds cannot distract by opposing temptations, or dissipation infect with its frivolities?

I have often thought that had the execution of Atala equalled its design, no human work could have surpassed it in its grandeur. What picture is more simple, though more sublime, than the vast solitude of an unpeopled wilderness, the woods, the mountains, the face of nature, cast in the fresh yet giant mould of a new and unpolluted world; and, amidst those most silent and mighty temples of THE GREAT GOD, the lone spirit of Love reigning and brightening over all?

BOOK II.

It is dangerous for women, however wise it be for men, "to commune with their own hearts, and to be still!" Continuing to pursue the follies of the world had been to Emily more prudent than to fly them; to pause, to separate herself from the herd, was to discover, to feel, to murmur at the vacuum of her being; and to occupy it with the feelings which it craved, could in her be but the hoarding a provision for despair.

Married, before she had begun the bitter knowledge of *herself*, to a man whom it was impossible to love, yet deriving from nature a tenderness of soul, which shed itself over every thing around, her only escape from misery had been in the dormancy of feeling. The birth of her son had opened to her a new field of sensations, and she drew the best charm of her own existence from the life she had given to another. Had she not met Falkland, all the deeper sources of affection would have flowed into one only and legitimate channel; but those whom *he* wished to fascinate had never resisted his power, and the attachment he inspired was in proportion to the strength and ardour of his own nature.

It was not for Emily Mandeville to love such as Falkland without feeling that from that moment a separate and selfish existence had ceased *to be*. Our senses may captivate us with beauty; but in absence we forget, or by reason we can conquer, so superficial an impression. Our vanity may enamour us with rank; but the affections of vanity are traced in sand; but who can love *Genius*, and not feel that the sentiments it excites

partake of its own intenseness and its own immortality? It arouses, concentrates, engrosses all our emotions, even to the most subtle and concealed. Love what is common, and ordinary objects can replace or destroy a sentiment which an ordinary object has awakened. Love what we shall not meet again amidst the littleness and insipidity which surround us, and where can we turn for a new object to replace that which has no parallel upon earth? The recovery from such a delirium is like return from a fairy land; and still fresh in the recollections of a bright and immortal clime, how can we endure the dullness of that human existence to which for the future we are condemned?

It was some weeks since Emily had written to Mrs. St. John; and her last letter, in mentioning Falkland, had spoken of him with a reserve which rather alarmed than deceived her friend. Mrs. St. John had indeed a strong and secret reason for fear. Falkland had been the object of her own and her earliest attachment, and she knew well the singular and mysterious power which he exercised at will over the mind. He had, it is true, never returned, nor even known of, her feelings towards him; and during the years which had elapsed since she last saw him, and in the new scenes which her marriage with Mr. St. John had opened, she had almost forgotten her early attachment, when Lady Emily's letter renewed its remembrance. She wrote in answer an impassioned and affectionate caution to her friend. She spoke much (after complaining of Emily's late silence) in condemnation of the character of Falkland, and in warning of its fascinations; and she attempted to arouse alike the virtue and the pride which so often triumph in alliance, when separately they would so easily fail. In this Mrs. St. John probably imagined she was actuated solely by friendship; but in the best actions there is always some latent evil in the motive; and the selfish-

ness of a jealousy, though hopeless not conquered, perhaps predominated over the less interested feelings which were all that she acknowledged to herself.

In this work it has been my object to portray the progress of the passions; to chronicle a history rather by thoughts and feelings than by incidents and events; and to lay open those minuter and more subtle mazes and secrets of the human heart, which in modern writings have been so sparingly exposed. It is with this view that I have from time to time broken the thread of narration, in order to bring forward more vividly the characters it contains; and in laying no claim to the ordinary ambition of tale-writers, I have deemed myself at liberty to deviate from the ordinary courses they pursue. Hence the motive and the excuse for the insertion of the following extracts, and of occasional letters. They portray the interior struggle when Narration would look only to the external event, and trace the lightning "home to its cloud," when History would only mark the spot where it scorched or destroyed.

EXTRACTS FROM THE JOURNAL OF LADY EMILY MANDEVILLE.

Tuesday.—More than seven years have passed since I began this journal! I have just been looking over it from the commencement. Many and various are the feelings which it attempts to describe—anger, pique, joy, sorrow, hope, pleasure, weariness, ennui; but never, never once, humiliation or remorse!—these were not doomed to be my portion in the bright years of my earliest youth. How shall I describe them now? I have received—I have read, as well as my tears would let me, a long letter from Julia. It is true that I have not dared to write to her: when shall I answer this? She has shown me the state of my heart; I more than

suspected it before. Could I have dreamed two months —six weeks since—that I should have a single feeling of which I could be ashamed? *He* has just been here —*He*—the only one in the world, for all the world seems concentred in him. He observed my distress, for I looked on him; and my lips quivered and my eyes were full of tears. He came to me—he sat next to me —he whispered his interest, his anxiety—and was this all? Have I loved before I even knew that I was beloved? No, no; the tongue was silent, but the eye, the cheek, the manner—alas! *these* have been but too eloquent!

Wednesday.—It was so sweet to listen to his low and tender voice; to watch the expression of his countenance —even to breathe the air that he inhaled. But now that I know its cause, I feel that this pleasure is a crime, and I am miserable even when he is with me. He has not been here to-day. It is past three. Will he come? I rise from my seat—I go to the window for breath—I am restless, agitated, disturbed. Lady Margaret speaks to me—I scarcely answer her. My boy—yes, my dear, dear Henry comes, and I feel that I am again a mother. Never will I betray that duty, though I have forgotten one as sacred, though less dear! Never shall my son have cause to blush for his parent! I will fly hence— I will see *him* no more!

FROM ERASMUS FALKLAND, ESQ., TO THE HON. FREDERICK MONKTON.

Write to me, Monkton—exhort me, admonish me, or forsake me for ever. I am happy, yet wretched: I wander in the delirium of a fatal fever, in which I see dreams of a brighter life, but every one of them only brings me nearer to death. Day after day I have lingered here, until weeks have flown—and for what?

Emily is not like the women of the world—virtue, honour, faith, are not to her the mere *convenances* of society. "There is no crime," said Lady A., "where there is concealment." Such can never be the creed of Emily Mandeville. She will not disguise guilt either in the levity of the world, or in the affectations of sentiment. She will be wretched, and for ever. *I* hold the destinies of her future life, and yet I am base enough to hesitate whether to save or destroy her. Oh, how fearful, how selfish, how degrading, is unlawful love!

You know my theoretical benevolence for every thing that lives; you have often smiled at its vanity. I see now that you were right; for it seems to me almost superhuman virtue not to destroy the person who is dearest to me on earth.

I remember writing to you some weeks since that I would come to London. Little did I know of the weakness of my own mind. I told her that I intended to depart. She turned pale—she trembled—but she did not speak. Those signs which should have hastened my departure have taken away the strength even to think of it.

I am here still! I go to E—— every day. Sometimes we sit in silence; I dare not trust myself to speak. How dangerous are such moments! *Ammutiscon lingue parlen l'alme.*

Yesterday they left us alone. We had been conversing with Lady Margaret on indifferent subjects. There was a pause for some minutes. I looked up; Lady Margaret had left the room. The blood rushed into my cheek—my eyes met Emily's; I would have given worlds to have repeated with my lips what those eyes expressed. I could not even speak—I felt choked with contending emotions. There was not a breath stirring; I heard my very heart beat. A thunderbolt

would have been a relief. Oh God! if there be a curse, it is to burn, swell, madden with feelings which you are doomed to conceal! This is, indeed, to be "a cannibal of one's own heart." *

It was sunset. Emily was alone upon the lawn which sloped towards the lake, and the blue still waters beneath broke, at bright intervals, through the scattered and illuminated trees. She stood watching the sun sink with wistful and tearful eyes. Her soul was sad within her. The ivy which love first wreathes around his work had already faded away, and she now only saw the desolation of the ruin it concealed. Never more for her was that freshness of unwakened feeling which invests all things with a perpetual daybreak of sunshine, and incense, and dew. The heart may survive the decay or rupture of an innocent and lawful affection —"la marque reste, mais la blessure guérit"—but the love of darkness and guilt is branded in a character ineffaceable—eternal! The one is, like lightning, more likely to dazzle than to destroy, and, divine even in its danger, it *makes holy what it sears;* † but the other is like that sure and deadly fire which fell upon the cities of old, graving in the barrenness of the desert it had wrought the record and perpetuation of a curse. A low and thrilling voice stole upon Emily's ear. She turned —Falkland stood beside her. "I felt restless and unhappy," he said, "and I came to seek you. If (writes one of the fathers) a guilty and wretched man could behold, though only for a few minutes, the countenance of an angel, the calm and glory which it wears would so sink into his heart, that he would pass at once over the gulf of gone years into his first unsullied state of purity and hope; perhaps I thought of that sentence

* Bacon.

† According to the ancient superstition.

when I came to you." "I know not," said Emily, with a deep blush at this address, which formed her only answer to the compliment it conveyed; "I know not why it is, but to me there is always something melancholy in this hour—something mournful in seeing the beautiful day die with all its pomp and music, its sunshine, and songs of birds."

"And yet," replied Falkland, "if I remember the time when my feelings were more in unison with yours (for at present external objects have lost for me much of their influence and attraction), the melancholy you perceive has in it a vague and ineffable sweetness not to be exchanged for more exhilarated spirits. The melancholy which arises from no cause within ourselves is like music—it enchants us in proportion to its effect upon our feelings. Perhaps its chief charm (though this it requires the contamination of after years before we can fathom and define) is in the purity of the sources it springs from. Our feelings can be but little sullied and worn while they can yet respond to the passionless and primal sympathies of nature; and the sadness you speak of is so void of bitterness, so allied to the best and most delicious sensations we enjoy, that I should imagine the *very happiness of Heaven partook rather of melancholy than mirth.*"

There was a pause of some moments. It was rarely that Falkland alluded even so slightly to the futurity of another world; and when he did, it was never in a careless and common-place manner, but in a tone which sank deep into Emily's heart. "Look," she said, at length, "at that beautiful star! the first and brightest! I have often thought it was like the promise of life beyond the tomb—a pledge to us that, even in the depths of midnight, the earth shall have a light, unquenched and unquenchable, from Heaven!"

Emily turned to Falkland as she said this, and her

countenance sparkled with the enthusiasm she felt. But *his* face was deadly pale. There went over it, like a cloud, an expression of changeful and unutterable thought; and then, passing suddenly away, it left his features calm and bright in all their noble and intellectual beauty. Her soul yearned to him, as she looked, with the tenderness of a sister.

They walked slowly towards the house. "I have frequently," said Emily, with some hesitation, "been surprised at the little enthusiasm you appear to possess even upon subjects where your conviction must be strong." "*I have thought enthusiasm away!*" replied Falkland; "it was the loss of hope which brought me reflection, and in reflection I forgot to feel. Would that I had not found it so easy to recall what I thought I had lost for ever!"

Falkland's cheek changed as he said this, and Emily sighed faintly, for she felt his meaning. In him that allusion to his love had aroused a whole train of dangerous recollections; for Passion is the avalanche of the human heart—*a single breath can dissolve it from its repose.*

They remained silent; for Falkland would not trust himself to speak, till, when they reached the house, he faltered out his excuses for not entering, and departed. He turned towards his solitary home. The grounds at E—— had been laid out in a classical and costly manner, which contrasted forcibly with the wild and simple nature of the surrounding scenery. Even the short distance between Mr. Mandeville's house and L—— wrought as distinct a change in the character of the country as any length of space could have effected. Falkland's ancient and ruinous abode, with its shattered arches and moss-grown parapets, was situated on a gentle declivity, and surrounded by dark elm and larch trees. It still retained some traces both of its former

consequence, and of the perils to which that consequence had exposed it. A broad ditch, overgrown with weeds, indicated the remains of what once had been a moat; and huge rough stones, scattered around it, spoke of the outworks the fortification had anciently possessed, and the stout resistance they had made in "the Parliament Wars" to the sturdy followers of Ireton and Fairfax. The moon, that flatterer of decay, shed its rich and softening beauty over a spot which else had, indeed, been desolate and cheerless, and kissed into light the long and unwaving herbage which rose at intervals from the ruins, like the false parasites of fallen greatness. But for Falkland the scene had no interest or charm, and he turned with a careless and unheeding eye to his customary apartment. It was the only one in the house furnished with luxury, or even comfort. Large book-cases, inlaid with curious carvings in ivory; busts of the few public characters the world had ever produced worthy, in Falkland's estimation, of the homage of posterity; elaborately wrought hangings from Flemish looms; and French fauteuils and sofas of rich damask, and massy gilding (relics of the magnificent days of Louis Quatorze) bespoke a costliness of design suited rather to Falkland's wealth than to the ordinary simplicity of his tastes.

A large writing-table was overspread with books in various languages, and upon the most opposite subjects. Letters and papers were scattered amongst them; Falkland turned carelessly over the latter. One of the epistolary communications was from Lord——, the ——. He smiled bitterly, as he read the exaggerated compliments it contained, and saw to the bottom of the shallow artifice they were meant to conceal. He tossed the letter from him, and opened the scattered volumes, one after another, with that languid and sated feeling common to all men who have read deeply enough to feel how much

they have learned, and how little they know. "We pass our lives," thought he, "in sowing what we are never to reap! We endeavour to erect a tower, which shall reach the heavens, in order to escape *one* curse, and lo! we are smitten by *another!* We would soar from a common evil, and from that moment *we are divided by a separate language from our race!* Learning, science, philosophy, the world of men and of imagination, I ransacked—and for what? I centred my happiness in wisdom. I looked upon the aims of others with a scornful and loathing eye. I held commune with those who have gone before me; I dwelt among the monuments of their minds, and made their records familiar to me as friends: I penetrated the womb of nature, and went with the secret elements to their home: I arraigned the stars before me, and learned the method and the mystery of their courses: I asked the tempest its bourn, and questioned the winds of their path. This was not sufficient to satisfy my thirst for knowledge, and I searched in this lower world for new sources to content it. Unseen and unsuspected, I saw and agitated the springs of the automaton that we call "the Mind." I found a clue for the labyrinth of human motives, and I surveyed the hearts of those around me as through a glass. Vanity of vanities! What have I acquired? I have separated myself from my kind, but not from those worst enemies, my passions! I have made a solitude of my soul, but I have not mocked it with the appellation of Peace.* In flying the herd, I have not escaped from myself; like the wounded deer, the barb was within me, and *that* I could not fly!" With these thoughts he turned from his reverie, and once more endeavoured to charm his own reflections by those which ought to speak to us of quiet, for they are graven on the pages of the dead; but his attempts were

* "Solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant."—TACITUS.
"They make a solitude, and call it peace."—BYRON.

as idle as before. His thoughts were still wandering and confused, and could neither be quieted nor collected: he read, but he scarcely distinguished one page from another: he wrote—the ideas refused to flow at his call; and the only effort at connecting his feelings which even partially succeeded, was in the verses which I am about to place before the reader. It is a common property of poetry, however imperfectly the gift be possessed, to speak to the hearts of others in proportion as the sentiments it would express are felt in our own; and I subjoin the lines which bear the date of that evening, in the hope that, more than many pages, they will show the morbid yet original character of the writer, and the particular sources of feeling from which they took the bitterness that pervades them:—

KNOWLEDGE.

Ergo hominum genus incassum frustraque laborat
Semper, et in curis consumit inanibus aevum.—LUCRET.

'Tis midnight! Round the lamp which o'er
My chamber sheds its lonely beam,
Is wisely spread the varied lore
Which feeds in youth our feverish dream—

The dream—the thirst—the wild desire,
Delirious yet divine—to *know;*
Around to roam—above aspire—
And drink the breath of Heaven below!

From Ocean—Earth—the Stars—the Sky
To lift mysterious Nature's pall;
And bare before the kindling eye
In MAN the darkest mist of all!

Alas! what boots the midnight oil?
The madness of the struggling mind?
Oh, vague the hope, and vain the toil,
Which only leave us doubly blind!

What learn we from the Past?—the same
Dull course of glory, guilt, and gloom:
I ask'd the Future, and there came
No voice from its unfathom'd womb.

The Sun was silent, and the wave;
The air but answer'd with its breath;
But Earth was kind; and from the grave
Arose the eternal answer—*Death!*

And *this* was all! We need no sage
To teach us Nature's only truth!
O fools! o'er Wisdom's idle page
To waste the hours of golden youth!

In Science wildly do we seek
What only withering years should bring—
The languid pulse—the feverish cheek—
The spirits drooping on their wing!

To think—is but to learn to groan—
To scorn what all beside adore—
To feel amid the world alone,
An alien on a desert shore;—

To lose the only ties which seem
To idler gaze in mercy given!—
To find love, faith, and hope, a dream,
And turn to dark despair from heaven!

* * * * *

I pass on to a wilder period of my history. The passion, as yet only revealed by the eye, was now to be recorded by the lip; and the scene which witnessed the first confession of the lovers was worthy of the last conclusion of their loves!

E—— was about twelve miles from a celebrated cliff on the seashore, and Lady Margaret had long proposed an excursion to a spot, curious alike for its natural scenery and the legends attached to it. A day was at length fixed for accomplishing this plan. Falkland was of the party. In searching for something in the pockets of the carriage, his hand met Emily's, and involuntarily pressed it. She withdrew it hastily, but he felt it tremble. He did not dare to look up: that single contact had given him a new life: intoxicated with the most delicious sensations, he leaned back in silence. A fever had entered his veins—the thrill of the touch had gone like fire into his system—all his frame seemed one nerve.

Lady Margaret talked of the weather and the prospect, wondered how far they had got, and animadverted on the roads, till at last, like a child, she talked herself to

rest. Mrs. Dalton read "Guy Mannering;" but neither Emily nor her lover had any occupation or thought in common with their companions: silent and absorbed, they were only alive to the vivid existence of the present. Constantly engaged, as we are, in looking behind us or before, if there be one hour in which we feel only the time being—in which we feel sensibly that we live, and that those moments of the present are full of the enjoyment, the rapture of existence—it is when we are with the *one* person whose life and spirits have become the great part and principle of our own. They reached their destination—a small inn close by the shore. They rested there a short time, and then strolled along the sands towards the cliff. Since Falkland had known Emily, her character was much altered. Six weeks before the time I write of, and in playfulness and lightness of spirits she was almost a child: now those indications of an unawakened heart had mellowed into a tenderness full of that melancholy so touching and holy, even amid the voluptuous softness which it breathes and inspires. But this day, whether from that coquetry so common to all women, or from some cause more natural to *her*, she seemed gayer than Falkland ever remembered to have seen her. She ran over the sands, picking up shells, and tempting the waves with her small and fairy feet, not daring to look at him, and yet speaking to him at times with a quick tone of levity which hurt and offended him, even though he knew the depth of those feelings she could not disguise either from him or from herself. By degrees his answers and remarks grew cold and sarcastic. Emily affected pique; and when it was discovered that the cliff was still nearly two miles off, she refused to proceed any farther. Lady Margaret talked her at last into consent, and they walked on as sullenly as an English party of pleasure possibly could do, till they were within three quarters of a mile of the place,

when Emily declared she was so tired that she really could not go on. Falkland looked at her, perhaps, with no very amiable expression of countenance, when he perceived that she seemed really pale and fatigued; and when she caught his eyes, tears rushed into her own.

"Indeed, indeed, Mr. Falkland," said she, eagerly, "this is *not* affectation. I am very tired; but rather than prevent your amusement, I will endeavour to go on." "Nonsense, child," said Lady Margaret, "you *do* seem tired. Mrs. Dalton and Falkland shall go to the rock, and I will stay here with you." This proposition, however, Lady Emily (who knew Lady Margaret's wish to see the rock) would not hear of; she insisted upon staying by herself. "Nobody will run away with me; and I can very easily amuse myself with picking up shells till you come back." After a long remonstrance, which produced no effect, this plan was at last acceded to. With great reluctance Falkland set off with his two companions; but after the first step, he turned to look back. He caught her eye, and felt from that moment that their reconciliation was sealed. They arrived, at last, at the cliff. Its height, its excavations the romantic interest which the traditions respecting it had inspired, fully repaid the two women for the fatigue of their walk. As for Falkland, he was unconscious of every thing around him; he was full of "sweet and bitter thoughts." In vain the man whom they found loitering there, in order to serve as a guide, kept dinning in his ear stories of the marvellous, and exclamations of the sublime. The first words which aroused him were these—"It's lucky, please your Honour, that you have just saved the tide. It is but last week that three poor people were drowned in attempting to come here; as it is, you will have to go home round the cliff. Falkland started: he felt his heart stand still. "Good God!" cried Lady Margaret, "what will become of Emily?"

They were at that instant in one of the caverns, where they had already been loitering too long. Falkland rushed out to the sands. The tide was hurrying in with a deep sound, which came on his soul like a knell. He looked back towards the way they had come: not one hundred yards distant, and the waters had already covered the path! An eternity would scarcely atone for the horror of that moment! One great characteristic of Falkland was his presence of mind. He turned to the man who stood beside him—he gave him a cool and exact description of the spot where he had left Emily. He told him to repair with all possible speed to his home—to launch his boat—to row it to the place he had described. "Be quick," he added, "and you *must* be in time: if you are, you shall never know poverty again." The next moment he was already several yards from the spot. He ran or rather flew, till he was stopped by the waters. He rushed in; they were over a hollow between two rocks—they were already up to his chest. "There is yet hope," thought he, when he had passed the spot, and saw the smooth sand before him. For some minutes he was scarcely sensible of existence; and then he found himself breathless at *her* feet. Beyond, towards T—— (the small inn I spoke of), the waves had already reached the foot of the rocks, and precluded all hope of return. Their only chance was the possibility that the waters had not yet rendered impassable the hollow through which Falkland had just waded. He scarcely spoke; at least he was totally unconscious of what he said. He hurried her on breathless and trembling, with the sound of the booming waters ringing in his ear, and their billows advancing to his very feet. They arrived at the hollow: a single glance sufficed to show him that their solitary hope was past! The waters, before up to his chest, had swelled considerably: he could not swim. He saw in that instant that they were girt with a has-

tening and terrible death. Can it be believed that with that certainty ceased his fear? He looked in the pale but calm countenance of her who clung to him, and a strange tranquillity, even mingled with joy, possessed him. Her breath was on his cheek—her form was reclining on his own—his hand clasped hers; if they were to die, it was thus. What could life afford to him more dear? "It is in this moment," said he, and he knelt as he spoke, "that I dare tell you what otherwise my lips never should have revealed. I love—I adore you! Turn not away from me thus. In life our persons were severed; if our hearts are united in death, then death will be sweet." She turned—*her cheek was no longer pale!* He rose—he clasped her to his bosom: his lips pressed hers. Oh! that long, deep, burning pressure! —youth, love, life, soul, all concentrated in that one kiss! Yet the same cause which occasioned the avowal hallowed also the madness of his heart. What had the passion, declared only at the approach of death, with the more earthly desires of life? They looked to heaven—it was calm and unclouded: the evening lay there in its balm and perfume, and the air was less agitated than their sighs. They turned towards the beautiful sea which was to be their grave: the wild birds flew over it exultingly: the far vessels seemed "rejoicing to run their course." All was full of the breath, the glory, the life of nature; and in how many minutes was all to be as *nothing!* Their existence would resemble the ships that have gone down at sea in the very smile of the element that destroyed them. They looked into each other's eyes, and they drew still nearer together. Their hearts, in safety apart, mingled in peril and became one. Minutes rolled on, and the great waves came dashing round them. They stood on the loftiest eminence they could reach. The spray broke over their feet: the billows rose—rose—they were speechless. He thought

he heard her heart beat, but her lip trembled not. A speck—a boat! "Look up, Emily! look up! See how it cuts the waters. Nearer—nearer! but a little longer, and we are safe. It is but a few yards off—it approaches —it touches the rock!" Ah! what to them henceforth was the value of life, when the moment of discovering its charm became also the date of its misfortunes, and when the death they had escaped was the only method of cementing their union without consummating their guilt?

FROM ERASMUS FALKLAND, ESQ., TO THE HON. FREDERICK MONKTON.

I will write to you at length to-morrow. Events have occurred to alter, perhaps, the whole complexion of the future. I am now going to Emily to propose to her to fly. We are not *les gens du monde*, who are ruined by the loss of public opinion. She has felt that I can be to her far more than the world; and as for me, what would I not forfeit for one touch of her hand?

EXTRACTS FROM THE JOURNAL OF LADY EMILY MANDEVILLE.

Friday.—Since I wrote yesterday in these pages the narrative of our escape, I have done nothing but think over those moments, too dangerous because too dear; but at last I have steeled my heart—I have yielded to my own weakness too long—I shudder at the abyss from which I have escaped. I can yet fly. He will come here to-day—he shall receive my farewell.

Saturday morning, four o'clock.—I have sat in this room alone since eleven o'clock. I cannot give vent to my feelings; they seem as if crushed by some load from which it is impossible to rise. "*He is gone, and for ever!*" I sit repeating those words to myself, scarcely

conscious of their meaning. Alas! when to-morrow comes, and the next day, and the next, and yet I see him not, I shall awaken, indeed, to all the agony of my loss! He came here—he saw me alone—he implored me to fly. I did not dare to meet his eyes; I hardened my heart against his voice. I knew the part I was to take—I have adopted it; but what struggles, what misery, has it not occasioned me! Who could have thought it had been so hard to be virtuous! His eloquence drove me from one defence to another, and then I had none but *his* mercy. I opened my heart—I showed him its weakness—I implored his forbearance. My tears, my anguish, convinced him of my sincerity. We have parted in bitterness, but, thank Heaven, not in guilt! He has entreated permission to write to me. How could I refuse him? Yet I may not—cannot—write to him again! How *could* I, indeed, suffer my heart to pour forth one of its feelings in reply? for would there be one word of regret, or one term of endearment, which my inmost soul would not echo?

Sunday.—Yes, *that day*—but I must not think of this; my very religion I dare not indulge. Oh God! how wretched I am! His visit was always the great æra in the day; it employed all my hopes till he came, and all *my memory* when he was gone. I sit now and look at the place he used to fill, till I feel the tears rolling silently down my cheek: they come without an effort—they depart without relief.

Monday.—Henry asked me where Mr. Falkland was gone; I stooped down to hide my confusion. When shall I hear from him? To-morrow? Oh that it were come! I have placed the clock before me, and I actually count the minutes. He left a book here; it is a volume of "Melmoth." I have read over every word of it, and whenever I have come to a pencil-mark by him, I have paused to dream over that varying and

eloquent countenance, the low soft tone of that tender voice, till the book has fallen from my hands, and I have started to find the utterness of my desolation!

FROM ERASMUS FALKLAND, ESQ., TO LADY EMILY MANDEVILLE.

— Hotel, London.

For the first time in my life I write to you! How my hand trembles—how my cheek flushes! a thousand, thousand thoughts rush upon me, and almost suffocate me with the variety and confusion of the emotions they awaken! I am agitated alike with the rapture of writing to you, and with the impossibility of expressing the feelings which I cannot distinctly unravel even to myself. You love me, Emily, and yet I have fled from you, and at your command; but the thought that, though absent, I am not forgotten, supports me through all.

It was with a feverish sense of weariness and pain that I found myself entering this vast reservoir of human vices. I became at once sensible of the sterility of that polluted soil so incapable of nurturing affection, and I clasped your image the closer to my heart. It is you, who, when I was most weary of existence, gifted me with a new life. You breathed into me a part of your own spirit; my soul feels that influence, and becomes more sacred. I have shut myself from the idlers who would molest me: I have built a temple in my heart: I have set within it a divinity; and the vanities of the world shall not profane the spot which has been consecrated to *you*. Our parting, Emily,—do you recall it? Your hand clasped in mine; your cheek resting, though but for an instant, on my bosom; and the tears which love called forth, but which virtue purified even at their source. Never were hearts so near, yet so divided; never was there an hour so tender yet so un-

accompanied with danger. Passion, grief, madness, all sank beneath your voice, and lay hushed like a deep sea within my soul! "Tu abbia veduto il leone ammansarsi alla sola tua voce." *

I tore myself from you; I hurried through the wood; I stood by the lake, on whose banks I had so often wandered with you: I bared my breast to the winds; I bathed my temples with the waters. Fool that I was! the fever, the fever was within! But it is not thus, my adored and beautiful friend, that I should console and support you. Even as I write, passion melts into tenderness, and pours itself in softness over your remembrance. The virtue so gentle, yet so strong; the feelings so kind, yet so holy, the tears which wept over the decision your lips proclaimed—these are the recollections which come over me like dew. Let your own heart, my Emily, be your reward; and know that your lover only forgets that he *adores*, to remember that he *respects* you!

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

— Park.

I could not bear the tumult and noise of London. I sighed for solitude, that I might muse over your remembrance undisturbed. I came here yesterday. It is the home of my childhood. I am surrounded on all sides by the scenes and images consecrated by the fresh recollections of my unsullied years. *They* are not changed. The seasons which come and depart renew in them the havoc which they make. If the December destroys, the April revives; but man has but one spring, and the desolation of the heart but one winter! In this very room have I sat and brooded over dreams and hopes which—but no matter—those dreams could never

* Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis.

show me a vision to equal *you*, or those hopes hold out to me a blessing so precious as your love.

Do you remember, or rather can you ever forget, that moment in which the great depths of our souls were revealed? Ah! not in the scene in which such vows should have been whispered to your ear, and your tenderness have blushed its reply. The passion concealed in darkness was revealed in danger; and the love, which in life was forbidden, was our comfort amidst the terrors of death! And that long and holy kiss, the first, the only moment in which our lips shared the union of our souls!—do not tell me that it is wrong to recall it!—do not tell me that I sin, when I own to you the hours I sit alone, and nurse the delirium of that voluptuous remembrance. The feelings you have excited may render me wretched, but not guilty; for the love of *you* can only *hallow* the heart—it is a fire which consecrates the altar on which it burns. I feel, even from the hour that I loved, that my soul has become more pure. I could not have believed that *I* was capable of so unearthly an affection, or that the love of woman could possess that divinity of virtue which I worship in yours. The world is no fosterer of our young visions of purity and passion: embarked in its pursuits, and acquainted with its pleasures, while the latter sated me with what is evil, the former made me incredulous to what is pure. I considered your sex as a problem which my experience had already solved. Like the French philosophers, who lose truth by endeavouring to condense it, and who forfeit the *moral* from their regard to the *maxim*, I concentrated my knowledge of women into aphorisms and antitheses; and I did not dream of the exceptions, if I did not find myself deceived in the general conclusion. I confess that I erred; I renounce from this moment the colder reflections of my manhood,—the fruits of a bitter experience,—the wisdom of an inquiring yet

agitated life. I return with transport to my earliest visions of beauty and love; and I dedicate them upon the altar of my soul to you, who have embodied, and concentrated, and breathed them into life!

EXTRACTS FROM THE JOURNAL OF LADY EMILY MANDEVILLE.

Monday.—This is the most joyless day in the whole week; for it can bring me no letter from him. I rise listlessly, and read over again and again the last letter I received from him—useless task! it is graven on my heart! I long only for the day to be over, because to-morrow I may, perhaps, hear from him again. When I wake at night from my disturbed and broken sleep, I look if the morning is near; not because it gives light and life, but because it may bring tidings of him. When his letter is brought to me, I keep it for minutes unopened—I feed my eyes on the handwriting—I examine the seal—I press it with my kisses, before I indulge myself in the luxury of reading it. I then place it in my bosom, and take it thence only to read it again and again,—to moisten it with my tears of gratitude and love, and, alas! of penitence and remorse! What can be the end of this affection? I dare neither to hope that it may continue or that it may cease; in either case I am wretched for ever!

Monday night, twelve o'clock.—They observe my paleness; the tears which tremble in my eyes; the listlessness and dejection of my manner. I think Mrs. Dalton guesses the cause. Humbled and debased in my own mind, I fly, Falkland, for refuge to you! Your affection cannot raise me to my former state, but it can reconcile—no—not reconcile, but support me in my present. This dear letter, I kiss it again—oh! that to-morrow were come!

Tuesday.—Another letter, so kind, so tender, so encouraging: would that I deserved his praises! alas! I sin even in reading them. I know that I ought to struggle more against my feelings—*once* I attempted it; I prayed to Heaven to support me; I put away from me everything that could recall him to my mind—for three days I would not open his letters. I could then resist no longer; and my weakness became the more confirmed from the feebleness of the struggle. I remember one day that he told us of a beautiful passage in one of the ancients, in which the bitterest curse against the wicked is, that they may see virtue, but not be able to obtain it; *—*that* punishment is mine!

Wednesday.—My boy has been with me: I see him now from the windows gathering the field-flowers, and running after every butterfly which comes across him. Formerly he made all my delight and occupation; now he is even dearer to me than ever; but he no longer engrosses all my thoughts. I turn over the leaves of this journal; once it noted down the little occurrences of the day; it marks nothing now but the monotony of sadness. *He* is not here—*he* cannot come. What event then *could* I notice?

FROM ERASMUS FALKLAND, ESQ., TO LADY EMILY MANDEVILLE.†

— Park.

If you knew how I long, how I thirst, for one word from you—one word to say you are well, and have not forgotten me!—but I will not distress you. You will guess my feelings, and do justice to the restraint I impose on them, when I make no effort to alter your resolution not to write. I know that it is just, and I bow to my sentence; but can you blame me if I am restless,

* Persius.

† Most of the letters from Falkland to Lady E. Mandeville I have thought it expedient to suppress.

and if I repine? It is past twelve; I always write to you at night. It is then, my own love, that my imagination can the more readily transport me to you: it is then that my spirit holds with you a more tender and undivided commune. In the day the world can force itself upon my thoughts, and its trifles usurp the place which "I love to keep for only thee and Heaven;" but in the night all things recall you the more vividly: the stillness of the gentle skies,—the blandness of the unbroken air,—the stars, so holy in their loveliness, all speak and breathe to me of you. I think your hand is clasped in mine; and I again drink the low music of your voice, and imbibe again in the air the breath which has been perfumed by your lips. You seem to stand in my lonely chamber in the light and stillness of a spirit, who has wandered on earth to teach us the love which is felt in Heaven.

I cannot, believe me, I cannot endure this separation long; it must be more or less. You must be mine for ever, or our parting must be without a mitigation, which is rather a cruelty than a relief. If you will not accompany me, I will leave this country alone. I must not wean myself from your image by degrees, but break from the enchantment at once. And when, Emily, I am once more upon the world, when no tidings of my fate shall reach your ear, and all its power of alienation be left to the progress of time—then, when you will at last have forgotten me, when your peace of mind will be restored, and, having no struggles of conscience to undergo, you will have no remorse to endure; then, Emily, when we are indeed divided, let the scene which has witnessed our passion, the letters which have recorded my vow, the evil we have suffered, and the temptation we have overcome; let these in our old age be remembered, and in declaring to Heaven that we were innocent, add also—*that we loved.*

FROM DON ALPHONSO D'AGUILAR TO DON —.

London.

Our cause gains ground daily. The great, indeed the only ostensible object of my mission is nearly fulfilled; but I have another charge and attraction which I am now about to explain to you. You know that my acquaintance with the English language and country arose from my sister's marriage with Mr. Falkland. After the birth of their only child I accompanied them to England: I remained with them for three years, and I still consider those days among the whitest in my restless and agitated career. I returned to Spain; I became engaged in the troubles and dissensions which distracted my unhappy country. Years rolled on, *how* I need not mention to *you*. One night they put a letter into my hands; it was from my sister; it was written on her death-bed. Her husband had died suddenly. She loved him as a Spanish woman loves, and she could not survive his loss. Her letter to me spoke of her country and her son. Amid the new ties she had formed in England, she had never forgotten the land of her fathers. "I have already," she said, "taught my boy to remember that he has two countries; that the one, prosperous and free, may afford him his pleasures; that the other, struggling and debased, demands from him his duties. If, when he has attained the age in which you can judge of his character, he is respectable only from his rank, and valuable only from his wealth; if neither his head nor his heart will make him useful to *our* cause, suffer him to remain undisturbed in his prosperity *here*: but if, as I presage, he becomes worthy of the blood which he bears in his veins, then I conjure you, my brother, to remind him that he has been sworn by me on my death-bed to the most sacred of earthly altars."

Some months since, when I arrived in England, before

I ventured to find him out in person, I resolved to inquire into his character. Had he been as the young and the rich generally are—had dissipation become habitual to him, and frivolity grown around him as a second nature, then I should have acquiesced in the former injunction of my sister much more willingly than I shall now obey the latter. I find that he is perfectly acquainted with our language, that he has placed a large sum in our funds, and that from the general liberality of his sentiments he is as likely to espouse, as (in that case) he would be certain, from his high reputation for talent, to serve, our cause. I am, therefore, upon the eve of seeking him out. I understand that he is living in perfect retirement in the county of —, in the immediate neighbourhood of Mr. Mandeville, an Englishman of considerable fortune, and warmly attached to our cause.

Mr. Mandeville has invited me to accompany him down to his estate for some days, and I am too anxious to see my nephew not to accept eagerly of the invitation. If I can persuade Falkland to aid us, it will be by the influence of his name, his talents, and his wealth. It is not of him that we can ask the stern and laborious devotion to which we have consecrated ourselves. The perfidy of friends, the vigilance of foes, the rashness of the bold, the cowardice of the wavering; strife in the closet, treachery in the senate, death in the field; *these* constitute the fate we have pledged ourselves to bear. Little can any, who do not endure it, imagine of the life to which those who share the contests of an agitated and distracted country are doomed; but if they know not our griefs, neither can they dream of our consolation. We move like the delineation of Faith, over a barren and desert soil: the rock, and the thorn, and the stings of the adder, are round our feet; but we clasp a crucifix to our hearts for our comfort, and we fix our eyes upon the heavens for our hope!

EXTRACTS FROM THE JOURNAL OF LADY EMILY MANDEVILLE.

Wednesday.—His letters have taken a different tone: instead of soothing, they add to my distress; but I deserve all—all that can be inflicted upon me. I have had a letter from Mr. Mandeville. He is coming down here for a few days, and intends bringing some friends with him: he mentions particularly a Spaniard—*the uncle of Mr. Falkland, whom he asks if I have seen.* The Spaniard is particularly anxious to meet his nephew—he does not then know that Falkland is gone. It will be some relief to see Mr. Mandeville alone; but even then how shall I meet him? What shall I say when he observes my paleness and alteration? I feel bowed to the very dust.

Thursday evening.—Mr. Mandeville has arrived: fortunately, it was late in the evening before he came, and the darkness prevented his observing my confusion and alteration. He was kinder than usual. Oh! how bitterly my heart avenged him! He brought with him the Spaniard, Don Alphonso d'Aguila; I think there is a faint family likeness between him and Falkland. Mr. Mandeville brought also a letter from Julia. She will be here the day after to-morrow. The letter is short, but kind: she does not allude to *him;* it is some days since I heard from him.

FROM ERASMUS FALKLAND, ESQ., TO THE HON. FREDERICK MONKTON.

I have resolved, Monkton, to go to her again! I am sure that it will be better for both of us to meet once more; perhaps, to unite for ever! None who have once loved me can easily forget me. I do not say this from vanity, because I owe it not to my being *superior* to, but

different from, others. I am sure that the remorse and affliction she feels now are far greater than she would experience, even were she more guilty, and with me. *Then*, at least, she would have some one to soothe and sympathize in whatever she might endure. To one so pure as Emily, the full crime is already incurred. It is not the innocent who insist upon that nice line of morality between the thought and the action: such distinctions require reflection, experience, deliberation, prudence of head, or coldness of heart; these are the traits, not of the guileless, but of the worldly. It is the *affections*, not the *person*, of a virtuous woman, which it is difficult to obtain: that difficulty is the safeguard to her chastity; that difficulty I have, in this instance, overcome. I have endeavoured to live without Emily, but in vain. Every moment of absence only taught me the impossibility. In twenty-four hours I shall see her again. I feel my pulse rise into fever at the very thought.

Farewell, Monkton. My next letter, I hope, will record my triumph.

BOOK III.

EXTRACTS FROM THE JOURNAL OF LADY EMILY MANDEVILLE.

Friday.—Julia is here, and so kind! She has not mentioned *his* name, but she sighed so deeply when she saw my pale and sunken countenance, that I threw myself into her arms and cried like a child. We had no need of other explanation: those tears spoke at once my confession and my repentance. No letter from him for several days! Surely he is not ill! how miserable that thought makes me!

Saturday.—A note has just been brought me from him. He is come back—*here!* Good heavens! how very imprudent! I am so agitated that I can write no more.

Sunday.—I have seen him! Let me repeat that sentence—*I have seen him.* Oh that moment! did it not atone for all that I have suffered? I dare not write everything he said, but he wished me to fly with him——*him*—what happiness, yet what guilt, in the very thought! Oh! this foolish heart—would that it might break! I feel too well the sophistry of his arguments, and yet I cannot resist them. He seems to have thrown a spell over me, which precludes even the effort to escape.

Monday.—Mr. Mandeville has asked several people in the country to dine here to-morrow, and there is to be a ball in the evening. Falkland is of course invited. We shall meet then, and *how?* I have been so little accustomed to disguise my feelings, that I quite tremble to

meet him with so many witnesses around. Mr. Mandeville has been so harsh to me to-day; if Falkland ever looked at me so, or ever said one such word, my heart would indeed break. What is it Alfieri says about the two demons to whom he is for ever a prey? "*La mente e il cor in perpetua lite.*" Alas! at times I start from my reveries with such a keen sense of agony and shame! How, how am I fallen!

Tuesday.—He is to come here to-day, and I shall see him!

Wednesday morning. — The night is over, thank Heaven! Falkland came late to dinner: every one else was assembled. How gracefully he entered! how superior he seemed to all the crowd that stood around him! He appeared as if he were resolved to exert powers which he had disdained before. He entered into the conversation, not only with such brilliancy, but with such a blandness and courtesy of manner! There was no scorn on his lip, no haughtiness on his forehead—nothing which showed him for a moment conscious of his immeasurable superiority over every one present. After dinner, as we retired, I caught his eyes. What volumes they told!—and then I had to listen to his praises, *and say nothing.* I felt angry even in my pleasure. Who but I had a right to speak of him so well!

The ball came on: I felt languid and dispirited. Falkland did not dance. He sat himself by me—he urged me to—O God! O God! would that I were dead!

FROM ERASMUS FALKLAND, ESQ., TO LADY EMILY MANDEVILLE.

How are you this morning, my adored friend? You seemed pale and ill when we parted last night, and I

shall be *so* unhappy till I hear something of you. Oh Emily, when you listened to me with those tearful and downcast looks: when I saw your bosom heave at every word which I whispered in your ear; when, as I accidently touched your hand, I felt it tremble beneath my own; oh! was there nothing in those moments at your heart which pleaded for me more eloquently than words? Pure and holy as you are, you know not, it is true, the feelings which burn and madden in me. When you are beside me, your hand, if it trembles, is not on fire: your voice, if it is more subdued, does not falter with the emotions it dares not express: your heart is not, like mine, devoured by a parching and wasting flame: your sleep is not turned by restless and turbulent dreams from the healthful renewal, into the very consumer, of life. No, Emily! God forbid that you *should* feel the guilt, the agony which preys upon me; but, at least, in the fond and gentle tenderness of your heart, there must be a voice you find it difficult to silence. Amidst all the fictitious ties and fascinations of art, you cannot dismiss from your bosom the unconquerable impulses of nature. What is it you fear?—you will answer, *disgrace!* But *can* you feel it, Emily, when you share it with me? Believe me that the love which is nursed through shame and sorrow is of a deeper and holier nature than that which is reared in pride, and fostered in joy. But, if not shame, it is guilt, perhaps, which you dread? Are you then so innocent *now?* The adultery of the heart is no less a crime than that of the deed; and—yet I will not deceive you—it *is* guilt to which I tempt you!—*it is* a fall from the proud eminence you hold now. I grant this, and I offer you nothing in recompense but my love. If you loved like me, you would feel that it was something of pride—of triumph—to dare all things, even crime, for the one to whom all things are as nought! As for me, I know that if a voice from Heaven told me

to desert you, I would only clasp you the closer to my heart!

I tell you, my own love, that when your hand is in mine, when your head rests upon my bosom, when those soft and thrilling eyes shall be fixed upon my own, when every sigh shall be mingled with my breath, and every tear be kissed away at the very instant it rises from its source—I tell you that then you shall only feel that every pang of the past, and every fear for the future, shall be but a new link to bind us the firmer to each other. Emily, my life, my love, you cannot, if you would, desert me. Who can separate the waters, which are once united, or divide the hearts which have met and mingled into one?

Since they had once more met, it will be perceived that Falkland had adopted a new tone in expressing his passion to Emily. In the book of guilt another page, branded in a deeper and more burning character, had been turned. He lost no opportunity of summoning the earthlier emotions to the support of his cause. He wooed her fancy with the golden language of poetry, and strove to arouse the latent feelings of her sex by the soft magic of his voice, and the passionate meaning it conveyed. But at times there came over him a deep and keen sentiment of remorse; and even, as his experienced and practised eye saw the moment of his triumph approach, he felt that the success he was hazarding his own soul and hers to obtain, might bring him a momentary transport, but not a permanent happiness. There is always this difference in the love of women and of men; that in the former, when once admitted, it engrosses all the sources of thought, and excludes every object but itself; but in the latter, it is shared with all the former reflections and feelings which the past yet bequeaths us, and can neither (however powerful be its

nature) constitute *the whole* of our happiness or woe. The love of man in his maturer years is not indeed so much a new emotion, as a revival and concentration of all his departed affections to others; and the deep and intense nature of Falkland's passion for Emily was linked with the recollections of whatever he had formerly cherished as tender or dear; it touched—it awoke a long chain of young and enthusiastic feelings, which arose, perhaps, the fresher from their slumber. Who, when he turns to recall his first and fondest associations; when he throws off, one by one, the layers of earth and stone which have grown and hardened over the records of the past: who has not been surprised to discover how fresh and unimpaired those buried treasures rise again upon his heart? They have been lain up in the store-house of Time; they have not perished; their very concealment has preserved them! *We remove the lava, and the world of a gone day is before us!*

The evening of the day on which Falkland had written the above letter was rude and stormy. The various streams with which the country abounded were swelled by late rains into an unwonted rapidity and breadth; and their voices blended with the rushing sound of the winds, and the distant roll of the thunder, which began at last sullenly to subside. The whole of the scene around L—— was of that savage yet sublime character, which suited well with the wrath of the aroused elements. Dark woods, large tracts of unenclosed heath, abrupt variations of hill and vale, and a dim and broken outline beyond of uninterrupted mountains, formed the great features of that romantic country.

It was filled with the recollections of his youth, and of the wild delight which he took then in the convulsions and varieties of nature, that Falkland roamed abroad that evening. The dim shadows of years,

crowded with concealed events and corroding reflections, all gathered around his mind, and the gloom and tempest of the night came over him like the sympathy of a friend.

He passed a group of terrified peasants; they were cowering under a tree. The oldest hid his head and shuddered; but the youngest looked steadily at the lightning which played at fitful intervals over the mountain stream that rushed rapidly by their feet. Falkland stood beside them unnoticed and silent, with folded arms and a scornful lip. To him, nature, heaven, earth, had nothing for fear, and every thing for reflection. In youth, thought he (as he contrasted the fear felt at one period of life with the indifference at another), there are so many objects to divide and distract life, that we are scarcely sensible of the collected conviction that we live. We lose the sense of what *is* by thinking rather of what is *to be*. But the old, who have no future to expect, are more vividly alive to the present, and they feel death more, because they have a more settled and perfect impression of existence.

He left the group, and went on alone by the margin of the winding and swelling stream. "It is (said a certain philosopher) in the conflicts of Nature that man most feels his littleness." Like all general maxims, this is only partially true. The mind, which takes its first ideas from perception, must take also its tone from the character of the objects perceived. In mingling our spirits with the great elements, we partake of their sublimity; we awaken thought from the secret depths where it had lain concealed; our feelings are too excited to remain riveted to ourselves; they blend with the mighty powers which are abroad; and, as in the agitations of men, the individual arouses from himself to become a part of the crowd, so in the convulsions of

nature we are equally awakened from the littleness of self, to be lost in the grandeur of the conflict by which we are surrounded.

Falkland still continued to track the stream: it wound its way through Mandeville's grounds, and broadened at last into the lake which was so consecrated to his recollections. He paused at that spot for some moments, looking carelessly over the wide expanse of waters, now dark as night, and now flashing into one mighty plain of fire beneath the coruscations of the lightning. The clouds swept on in massy columns, dark and aspiring—veiling, while they rolled up to, the great heavens, like the shadows of human doubt. Oh! weak, weak was that dogma of the philosopher! There is a *pride* in the storm which, according to his doctrine, would debase us; a stirring music in its roar; even a savage joy in its destruction: for we can exult in a defiance of its power, even while we share in its triumphs, in a consciousness of a superior spirit within us to that which is around. We can mock at the fury of the elements, for they are less terrible than the passions of the heart; at the devastations of the awful skies, for they are less desolating than the wrath of man; at the convulsions of that surrounding nature which has no peril, no terror to the soul, which is more indestructible and eternal than itself. Falkland turned towards the house which contained *his* world; and as the lightning revealed at intervals the white columns of the porch, and wrapt in sheets of fire, like a spectral throng, the tall and waving trees by which it was encircled, and then as suddenly ceased, and "the jaws of darkness" devoured up the scene; he compared, with that bitter alchymy of feeling which resolves all into one crucible of thought, those alternations of light and shadow to the history of his own guilty love—that passion whose birth was the womb of Night; shrouded in darkness, surrounded by

storms, and receiving only from the angry heavens a momentary brilliance, more terrible than its customary gloom.

As he entered the saloon, Lady Margaret advanced towards him. "My dear Falkland," said she, "how good it is in you to come in such a night. We have been watching the skies till Emily grew terrified at the lightning; *formerly* it did not alarm her." And Lady Margaret turned, utterly unconscious of the reproach she had conveyed, towards Emily.

Did not Falkland's look turn also to that spot? Lady Emily was sitting by the harp which Mrs. St. John appeared to be most seriously employed in tuning: her countenance was bent downwards, and burning beneath the blushes called forth by the gaze which she *felt* was upon her.

There was in Falkland's character a peculiar dislike to all outward display of less worldly emotions. He had none of the vanity most men have in conquest; he would not have had any human being know that he was loved. He was right! No altar should be so unseen and inviolable as the human heart! He saw at once and relieved the embarrassment he had caused. With the remarkable fascination and grace of manner so peculiarly his own, he made his excuses to Lady Margaret for his disordered dress; he charmed his uncle, Don Alphonso, with a quotation from Lopez de Vega; he inquired tenderly of Mrs. Dalton touching the health of her Italian greyhound; and then—nor till then—he ventured to approach Emily, and speak to her in that soft tone, which, like a fairy language, is understood only by the person it addresses. Mrs. St. John rose and left the harp; Falkland took her seat. He bent down to whisper Emily. His long hair touched her cheek! it was still wet with the night dew. She looked up as she felt it, and met his gaze: better had it been to have lost earth

than to have drunk the soul's poison from that eye when it tempted to sin.

Mrs. St. John stood at some distance: Don Alphonso was speaking to her of his nephew, and of his hopes of ultimately gaining him to the cause of his mother's country. "See you not," said Mrs. St. John, and her colour went and came, "that while he has such attractions to detain him, your hopes are in vain?" "What mean you?" replied the Spaniard; but his eye had followed the direction she had given it, and the question came only from his lips. Mrs. St. John drew him to a still remoter corner of the room, and it was in the conversation that then ensued between them, that they agreed to unite for the purpose of separating Emily from her lover—"I to save my friend," said Mrs. St. John, "and you your kinsman." Thus is it with human virtue:—the fair show and the good deed without—the one eternal motive of selfishness within. During the Spaniard's visit at E——, he had seen enough of Falkland to perceive the great consequence he might, from his perfect knowledge of the Spanish language, from his singular powers, and, above all, from his command of wealth, be to the cause of that party he himself had adopted. His aim, therefore, was now no longer confined to procuring Falkland's good will and aim at home: he hoped to secure his personal assistance in Spain: and he willingly coincided with Mrs. St. John in detaching his nephew from a tie so likely to detain him from that service to which Alphonso wished he should be pledged.

Mandeville had left E—— that morning: he suspected nothing of Emily's attachment. This, on his part, was less confidence than indifference. He was one of those persons who have no existence separate from their own: his senses all turned inwards; they reproduced selfishness. Even the House of Commons was only an object of interest, because he imagined it *a part*

of him, not he of it. He said, with the insect on the wheel, "Admire *our* rapidity." But did the defects of his character remove Lady Emily's guilt? No! and this, at times, was her bitterest conviction. Whoever turns to these pages for an apology for sin will be mistaken. They contain the burning records of its sufferings, its repentance, and its doom. If there be one crime in the history of woman worse than another, it is adultery. It is, in fact, the only crime to which, in ordinary life, she is exposed. Man has a thousand temptations to sin—woman has but one; if she cannot resist it, she has no claim upon our mercy. The heavens are just! her own guilt is her punishment! Should these pages, at this moment, meet the eyes of one who has become the centre of a circle of disgrace—the contaminator of her house—the dishonour of her children,—no matter what the excuse for her crime—no matter what the exchange of her station—in the very arms of her lover, in the very cincture of the new ties which she has chosen—I call upon her to answer me if the fondest moments of rapture are free from humiliation, though they have forgotten remorse; and if the passion itself of her lover has not become no less the penalty than the recompense of her guilt? But at that hour of which I now write, there was neither in Emily's heart, nor in that of her seducer, any recollection of their sin. Those hearts were too full for thought—they had forgotten every thing but each other. Their love was their creation: beyond, all was night—chaos—nothing!

Lady Margaret approached them. "You will sing to us, Emily, to-night? it is *so* long since we have heard you!" It was in vain that Emily tried—her voice failed. She looked at Falkland, and could scarcely restrain her tears. She had not yet learned the latest art which sin teaches us—*its concealment!* "I will supply Lady Emily's place," said Falkland. *His* voice was

calm, and *his* brow serene: the world had left nothing for him to learn. "Will you play the air," he said to Mrs. St. John, "that you gave us some nights ago? I will furnish the words." Mrs. St. John's hand trembled as she obeyed.

SONG.

1.

Ah, let us love while yet we may,
Our summer is decaying;
And woe to hearts which, in their gray
December, go a-maying.

2.

Ah, let us love, while of the fire
Time hath not yet bereft us:
With years our warmer thoughts expire,
Till only ice is left us!

3.

We'll fly the bleak world's bitter air—
A brighter home shall win us;
And if our hearts grow weary there,
We'll find a world within us.

4.

They preach that passion fades each hour,
That nought will pall like pleasure;
My bee, if Love's so frail a flower,
Oh, haste to hive its treasure.

5.

Wait not the hour, when all the mind
Shall to the crowd be given;
For links, which to the *million* bind,
Shall from the *one* be riven.

6.

But let us love while yet we may:
Our summer is decaying;
And woe to hearts which, in their gray
December, go a-maying.

The next day Emily rose ill and feverish. In the absence of Falkland, her mind always awoke to the full sense of the guilt she had incurred. She had been brought up in the strictest, even the most fastidious,

principles; and her nature was so pure, that merely to err appeared like a change in existence—like an entrance into some new and unknown world, from which she shrank back, in terror, to herself.

Judge, then, if she easily habituated her mind to its present degradation. She sat, that morning, pale and listless; her book lay unopened before her; her eyes were fixed upon the ground, heavy with suppressed tears. Mrs. St. John entered: no one else was in the room. She sat by her, and took her hand. Her countenance was scarcely less colourless than Emily's, but its expression was more calm and composed. "It is not too late, Emily," she said; "you have done much that you should repent—nothing to render repentance unavailing. Forgive me, if I speak to you on this subject. It is time—in a few days your fate will be decided. I have looked on, though hitherto I have been silent: I have witnessed that eye when it dwelt upon you; I have heard that voice when it spoke to your heart. None ever resisted their influence long: do you imagine that you are the first who have found the power? Pardon me, pardon me, I beseech you, my dearest friend, if I pain you. I have known you from your childhood, and I only wish to preserve you spotless to your old age."

Emily wept, without replying. "Mrs. St. John continued to argue and expostulate. What is so wavering as passion? When, at last, Mrs. St. John ceased, and Emily shed upon her bosom the hot tears of her anguish and repentance, she imagined that her resolution was taken, and that she could almost have vowed an eternal separation from her lover; Falkland came that evening, and she loved him more madly than before.

Mrs. St. John was not in the saloon when Falkland entered. Lady Margaret was reading the well-known story of Lady T—— and the Duchess of M——, in

which an agreement had been made and *kept*, that the one who died first should return once more to the survivor. As Lady Margaret spoke laughingly of the anecdote, Emily, who was watching Falkland's countenance, was struck with the dark and sudden shade which fell over it. He moved in silence towards the window where Emily was sitting. "Do you believe," she said, with a faint smile, "in the possibility of such an event?" "I believe—though I reject—nothing!" replied Falkland, "but I would give worlds for such a proof that death does not destroy." "Surely," said Emily, "you do not deny that evidence of our immortality which we gather from the Scriptures?—are *they* not all that a voice from the dead could be?" Falkland was silent for a few moments: he did not seem to hear the question; his eyes dwelt upon vacancy; and when he at last spoke, it was rather in commune with himself than in answer to her. "I have watched," said he, in a low internal tone, "over the tomb: I have called, in the agony of my heart, unto her who slept beneath; I would have *dissolved my very soul* into a spell, could it have summoned before me for one, one moment, the being who had once been the spirit of my life! I have been, as it were, *entranced* with the intensity of my own adjuration; I have gazed upon the empty air, and worked upon my mind to fill it with imaginings; I have called aloud unto the winds, and tasked my soul to waken their silence to reply. All was a waste—a stillness—an infinity—without a wanderer or a voice! The dead answered me not, when I invoked them; and in the vigils of the still night I looked from the rank grass and the mouldering stones to the Eternal Heavens, as man looks from decay to immortality! Oh! that awful magnificence of repose—that living sleep—that breathing yet unrevealing divinity, spread over those still worlds! To *them* also I poured my thoughts—*but in a whisper.* I

did not dare to breathe *aloud* the unhallowed anguish of my mind to the majesty of the unsympathising stars! In the vast order of creation—in the midst of the stupendous system of universal life, my doubt and inquiry were murmured forth—*a voice crying in the wilderness, and returning without an echo, unanswered unto myself!*"

The deep light of the summer moon shone over Falkland's countenance, which Emily gazed on, as she listened, almost tremblingly, to his words. His brow was knit and hueless, and the large drops gathered slowly over it, as if wrung from the strained yet impotent tension of the thoughts within. Emily drew nearer to him—she laid her hand upon his own. "Listen to me," she said: "if a herald from the grave could satisfy your doubt, *I would gladly die that I might return to you!*" "Beware," said Falkland, with an agitated but solemn voice; "the *words, now so lightly spoken, may be registered on high.*" "*Be it so!*" replied Emily firmly, and she felt what she said. *Her* love penetrated beyond the tomb, and she would have forfeited all here for their union hereafter.

"In my earliest youth," said Falkland, more calmly than he had yet spoken, "I found in the present and the past of this world enough to direct my attention to the futurity of another: if I did not credit all with the enthusiast, I had no sympathies with the scorner: I sat myself down to examine and reflect: I pored alike over the pages of the philosopher and the theologian; I was neither baffled by the subtleties, nor deterred by the contradictions of either. As men first ascertained the geography of the earth by observing the signs of the heavens, I did homage to the Unknown God, and sought from that worship to inquire into the reasonings of mankind. I did not confine myself to books—all things breathing or inanimate constituted my study.

From death itself I endeavoured to extract its secret; and whole nights I have sat in the crowded asylums of the dying, watching the last spark flutter and decay. Men die away as in sleep, without effort, or struggle, or emotion. I have looked on their countenances a moment before death, and the serenity of repose was upon them, waxing only more deep as it approached that slumber *which is never broken:* the breath grew gentler and gentler, till the lips it came from fell from each other, and all was hushed; the light had departed from the cloud, but the cloud itself, gray, cold, altered as it seemed, was as before. · *They died and made no sign.* They had left the labyrinth without bequeathing us its clew. It is in vain that I have sent my spirit into the land of shadows—it has borne back no witness of its inquiry. As Newton said of himself, 'I picked up a few shells by the sea-shore, but the great ocean of truth lay undiscovered before me.'"

There was a long pause. Lady Margaret had sat down to chess with the Spaniard. No look was upon the lovers: their eyes met, and with that one glance the whole current of their thoughts was changed. The blood, which a moment before had left Falkland's cheek so colourless, rushed back to it again. The love which had so penetrated and pervaded his whole system, and which abstruser and colder reflection had just calmed, thrilled through his frame with redoubled power. As if by an involuntary and mutual impulse, their lips met: he threw his arm round her; he strained her to his bosom. "Dark as my thoughts are," he whispered, "evil as has been my life, will you not yet soothe the one, and guide the other? My Emily! my love! the *Heaven to the tumultuous ocean of my heart*—will you not be mine—mine only—wholly—and for ever?" She did not answer—she did not turn from his embrace. Her cheek flushed as his breath stole over it, and her bosom heaved

beneath the arm which encircled that empire so devoted to him. "Speak one word, only one word," he continued to whisper: "will you not be mine? Are you not mine at heart even at this moment?" Her head sank upon his bosom. Those deep and eloquent eyes looked up to his through their dark lashes. "I *will* be yours," she murmured: "I am at your mercy; I have no longer any existence but in you. "My only fear is, that I shall cease to be worthy of your love!"

Falkland pressed his lips once more to her own: it was his only answer, and the last seal to their compact. As they stood before the open lattice, the still and unconscious moon looked down upon that record of guilt. There was not a cloud in the heavens to dim *her* purity: the very winds of night had hushed themselves to do her homage: all was silent but *their* hearts. They stood beneath the calm and holy skies, a guilty and devoted pair—a fearful contrast of the sin and turbulence of this unquiet earth to the passionless serenity of the eternal heaven. The same stars, that for thousands of unfathomed years had looked upon the changes of this nether world, gleamed pale, and pure, and steadfast upon their burning but transitory vow. In a few years what of the condemnation or the recorders of that vow would remain? From other lips, on that spot, other oaths might be plighted; new pledges of unchangeable fidelity exchanged: and, year after year, in each succession of scene and time, the same stars will look from the mystery of their untracked and impenetrable home, to mock, as now, with their immutability, the variations and shadows of mankind!

FROM ERASMUS FALKLAND, ESQ., TO LADY EMILY MANDEVILLE.

At length, then, you are to be mine—you have consented to fly with me. In three days we shall leave this country, and have no home—no world but in each other. We will go, my Emily, to those golden lands where Nature, the only companion we will suffer, woos us, like a mother, to find our asylum in her breast; where the breezes are languid beneath the passion of the voluptuous skies; and where the purple light that invests all things with its glory is only less tender and consecrating than the spirit which we bring. Is there not, my Emily, in the external nature which reigns over creation, and that human nature centred in ourselves, some secret and undefinable intelligence and attraction? Are not the impressions of the former as spells over the passions of the latter? and in gazing upon the loveliness around us, do we not gather, as it were, and store within our hearts, an increase of the yearning and desire of love? What can we demand from earth but its solitudes—what from heaven but its unpolluted air? All that others would ask from either, we can find in ourselves. Wealth—honour—happiness—every object of ambition or desire, exist not for us without the circle of our arms! But the bower that surrounds us shall not be unworthy of your beauty or our love. Amidst the myrtle and the vine, and the valleys where the summer sleeps, and the rivers that murmur the memories and the legends of old; amidst the hills and the glossy glades, and the silver fountains, still as beautiful as if the Nymph and Spirit yet held and decorated an earthly home;—amidst these we will make the couch of our bridals, and the moon of Italian skies shall keep watch on our repose.

Emily!—Emily!—how I love to repeat and to linger

over that beautiful name! If to see, to address, and, more than all, to touch you, has been a rapture, what word can I find in the vocabulary of happiness to express the realization of that hope which now burns within me—to mingle our youth together into one stream, wheresoever it flows; to respire the same breath; to be almost blent in the same existence; to grow, as it were, on one stem, and knit into a *single* life the feelings, the wishes, the *being* of both!

To-night I shall see you again: let one day more intervene, and—I cannot conclude the sentence! As I have written, the tumultuous happiness of hope has come over me to confuse and overwhelm everything else. At this moment my pulse riots with fever; the room swims before my eyes; everything is indistinct and jarring—a chaos of emotions. Oh! that happiness should ever have such excess!

When Emily received and laid this letter to her heart, she felt nothing in common with the spirit which it breathed. With that quick transition and inconstancy of feeling common in women, and which is as frequently their safety as their peril, her mind had already repented of the weakness of the last evening, and relapsed into the irresolution and bitterness of her former remorse. Never had there been in the human breast a stronger contest between conscience and passion;—if, indeed, the extreme softness (notwithstanding its power) of Emily's attachment could be called passion: it was rather a love that had refined by the increase of its own strength; it contained nothing but the primary guilt of conceiving it, which that order of angels, *whose nature is love*, would have sought to purify away. To see him, to live with him, to count the variations of his countenance and voice, to touch his hand at moments when waking, and watch over his slumbers when he slept—this was the

essence of her wishes, and constituted the limit to her desires. Against the temptations of the present was opposed the whole history of the past. Her mind wandered from each to each, wavering and wretched, as the impulse of the moment impelled it. Hers was not, indeed, a strong character; her education and habits had weakened, while they rendered more feminine and delicate a nature originally too soft. Every recollection of former purity called to her with the loud voice of duty, as a warning from the great guilt she was about to incur; and whenever she thought of her child—that centre of fond and sinless sensations, where once she had so wholly garnered up her heart—her feelings melted at once from the object which had so wildly held them riveted as by a spell, to dissolve and lose themselves in the great and sacred fountain of a mother's love.

When Falkland came that evening, she was sitting at a corner of the saloon, apparently occupied in reading, but her eyes were fixed upon her boy, whom Mrs. St. John was endeavouring at the opposite end of the room to amuse. The child, who was fond of Falkland, came up to him as he entered: Falkland stooped to kiss him; and Mrs. St. John said, in a low voice which just reached his ear, "Judas, too, kissed before he betrayed." Falkland's colour changed: he felt the sting the words were intended to convey. On that child, now so innocently caressing him, he was indeed about to inflict a disgrace and injury the most sensible and irremediable in his power. But who ever indulges reflection in passion? He banished the remorse from his mind as instantaneously as it arose; and, seating himself by Emily, endeavoured to inspire her with a portion of the joy and hope which animated himself. Mrs. St. John watched them with a jealous and anxious eye: she had already seen how useless had been her former attempt to arm

Emily's conscience effectually against her lover; but she resolved at least to renew the impression she had then made. The danger was imminent, and any remedy must be prompt; and it was something to protract, even if she could not finally break off, an union against which were arrayed all the angry feelings of jealousy, as well as the better affections of the friend. Emily's eye was already brightening beneath the words that Falkland whispered in her ear, when Mrs. St. John approached her. She placed herself on a chair beside them, and unmindful of Falkland's bent and angry brow, attempted to create a general and commonplace conversation. Lady Margaret had invited two or three people in the neighbourhood; and when these came in, music and cards were resorted to immediately, with that English *politesse*, which takes the earliest opportunity to show that the conversation of our friends is the last thing for which we have invited them. But Mrs. St. John never left the lovers; and at last, when Falkland, in despair at her obstinacy, arose to join the card-table, she said, "Pray, Mr. Falkland, were you not intimate at one time with ******, who eloped with Lady ***?" "I knew him but slightly," said Falkland; and then added, with a sneer, "the only times I ever met him were at your house." Mrs. St. John, without noticing the sarcasm, continued:—"What an unfortunate affair that proved! They were very much attached to one another in early life—the *only* excuse, perhaps, for a woman's breaking her subsequent vows. They eloped. The remainder of their history is briefly told: it is that of all who forfeit every thing for passion, and forget that of every thing it is the briefest in duration. He who had sacrificed his honour for her, sacrificed her also as lightly for another. She could not bear his infidelity; and how could she reproach him? In the very act of yielding to, she had come unworthy of, his love. She *did not*

reproach him—she died of a broken heart! I saw her just before her death, for I was distantly related to her, and I could not forsake her utterly even in her sin. She then spoke to me only of the child by her former marriage, whom she had left in the years when it most needed her care: she questioned me of its health—its education—its very growth: the minutest thing was not beneath her inquiry. His tidings were all that brought back to her mind 'the redolence of joy and spring.' I brought that child to her one day: *he* at least had never forgotten her. How bitterly both wept when they were separated! and she—poor, poor Ellen—an hour after their separation was no more!" There was a pause for a few minutes. Emily was deeply affected. Mrs. St. John had anticipated the effect she had produced, and concerted the method to increase it. "It is singular," she resumed, "that, the evening before her elopement, some verses were sent to her anonymously—I do not think, Emily, that you have ever seen them. Shall I sing them to you now?" and, without waiting for a reply, she placed herself at the piano; and with a low but sweet voice, greatly aided in effect by the extreme feeling of her manner, she sang the following verses:—

TO * * *

1.

And wilt thou leave that happy home,
Where once it was so sweet to live?
Ah! think, before thou seek'st to roam,
What safer shelter Guilt can give!

2.

The Bird may rove, and still regain
With spotless wings her wonted rest;
But home, once lost, is ne'er again
Restored to Woman's erring breast!

3.

If wandering o'er a world of flowers,
The heart at times would ask repose;
But *thou* wouldst lose the only bowers
Of rest amid a world of woes.

4.

Recall thy youth's unsullied vow—
The past which on thee smiled so fair;
Then turn from thence to picture now
The frowns thy future fate must wear!

5.

No hour, no hope, can bring relief
To her who hides a blighted name;
For hearts unbow'd by stormiest *grief*
Will break beneath one breeze of *shame!*

6.

And when thy child's deserted years
Amid life's early woes are thrown,
Shall menial bosoms soothe the tears
That should be shed on thine alone?

7.

When on thy name his lips shall call,
(That tender name, the earliest taught!)
Thou wouldst not Shame and Sin were all
The memories link'd arouud its thought!

8.

If Sickness haunt his infant bed,
Ah! what could then replace thy care?
Could hireling steps as gently tread
As if a Mother's soul was there?

9.

Enough! 'tis not too late to shun
The bitter draught thyself wouldst fill;
The latest link is not undone—
Thy bark is in the haven still.

10.

If doom'd to grief through life thou art,
'Tis thine at least unstain'd to die!
Oh! better break at once thy heart
Than rend it from its holiest tie!

It were vain to attempt describing Emily's feelings when the song ceased. The scene floated before her eyes indistinct and dark. The violence of the emotions she attempted to conceal pressed upon her almost to choking. She rose, looked at Falkland with one look

of such anguish and despair that it froze his very heart, and left the room without uttering a word. A moment more—they heard a noise—a fall. They rushed out—Emily was stretched on the ground, apparently lifeless. *She had broken a blood-vessel!*

BOOK IV.

FROM MRS. ST. JOHN TO ERASMUS FALKLAND, ESQ.

At last I can give a more favourable answer to your letters. Emily is now *quite* out of danger. Since the day you forced yourself, with such a disinterested regard for her health and reputation, into her room, she grew (no thanks to your forbearance) gradually better. I trust that she will be able to see you in a few days. I hope this the more, because she now feels and decides that it will be for the last time. You have, it is true, injured her happiness for life: her virtue, thank Heaven, is yet spared; and though you have made her wretched, you will never, I trust, succeed in making her despised.

You ask me, with some menacing and more complaint, why I am so bitter against you. I will tell you. I not only know Emily, and feel confident, from that knowledge, that nothing can recompense her for the reproaches of conscience, but I know *you*, and am convinced that you are the last man to render her happy. I set aside, for the moment, all rules of religion and morality in general, and speak to you (to use the cant and abused phrase) "without prejudice" as to the particular instance. Emily's nature is soft and susceptible, yours fickle and wayward in the extreme. The smallest change or caprice in you, which would not be noticed by a mind less delicate, would wound *her* to the heart. You know that the very softness of her character arises from its want of strength. Consider, for a moment, if she could bear the humiliation and disgrace which visit so heavily the offences of an English wife? She has

been brought up in the strictest notions of morality; and, in a mind not naturally strong, nothing can efface the first impressions of education. She is not—indeed she is not—fit for a life of sorrow or degradation. In another character, another line of conduct might be desirable; but with regard to *her*, pause, Falkland, I beseech you, before you attempt again to destroy her for ever. I have said all. Farewell.

Your, and above all, Emily's friend.

FROM ERASMUS FALKLAND, ESQ., TO LADY EMILY MANDEVILLE.

You will see me, Emily, now that you are recovered sufficiently to do so without danger. I do not ask this as a favour. If my love has deserved anything from yours, if past recollections give me any claim over you, if my nature has not forfeited the spell which it formerly possessed upon your own, I demand it as a right.

The bearer waits for your answer.

FROM LADY EMILY MANDEVILLE TO ERASMUS FALKLAND, ESQ.

See you, Falkland! Can you doubt it? Can you think for a moment that your commands can ever cease to become a law to me? Come here whenever you please. If, during my illness, they have prevented it, it was without my knowledge. I await you; but I own that this interview will be the last, if I can claim anything from your mercy.

FROM ERASMUS FALKLAND, ESQ., TO LADY EMILY MANDEVILLE.

I have seen you, Emily, and for the last time! My eyes are dry—my hand does not tremble. I live, move, breathe, as before—and yet I have seen you for the last time! You told me—even while you leaned on my bosom, even while your lip pressed mine—you told me (and I saw your sincerity) to spare you, and to see you no more. You told me you had no longer any will, any fate of your own; that you would, if I still continued to desire it, leave friends, home, honour, for me; but you did not disguise from me that you would, in so doing, leave happiness also. You did not conceal from me that I was not sufficient to constitute all your world: you threw yourself, as you had done once before, upon what you called my generosity: you did not deceive yourself then; you have not deceived yourself now. In two weeks I shall leave England, probably for ever. I have another country still more dear to me, from its afflictions and humiliation. Public ties differ but little in their nature from private; and this confession of preference of what is debased to what is exalted, will be an answer to Mrs. St. John's assertion, that we cannot love in disgrace as we can in honour. Enough of this. In the choice, my poor Emily, that you have made, I cannot reproach you. You have done wisely, rightly, virtuously. You said that this separation must rest rather with me than with yourself; that you would be mine the moment I demanded it. I will not now or ever accept this promise. No one, much less one whom I love so intensely, so truly as I do you, shall ever receive disgrace at my hands, unless she can feel that that disgrace would be dearer to her than glory elsewhere; that the simple fate of being mine was not so

much a recompense as a reward; and that, in spite of worldly depreciation and shame, it would constitute and concentrate all her visions of happiness and pride. I am now going to bid you farewell. May you—I say this disinterestedly, and from my very heart—may you soon forget how much you have loved and yet love me! For this purpose, you cannot have a better companion than Mrs. St. John. Her opinion of me is loudly expressed, and probably true; at all events, you will do wisely to believe it. You will hear me attacked and reproached by many. I do not deny the charges; you know best what I have deserved from *you*. God bless you, Emily. Wherever I go, I shall never cease to love you as I do now. May you be happy in your child and in your conscience! Once more, God bless you, and farewell!

FROM LADY EMILY MANDEVILLE TO ERASMUS FALKLAND, ESQ.

O Falkland! you have conquered! I am yours—*yours only—Wholly and for ever*. When your letter came, my hand trembled so, that I could not open it for several minutes; and when I did, I felt as if the very earth had passed from my feet. You were going from your country; you were about to be lost to me for ever. I could restrain myself no longer; all my virtue, my pride, forsook me at once. Yes, yes, you are indeed my world. I will fly with you any where—every where. Nothing can be dreadful, but not seeing you; I would be a servant—a slave—a dog, as long as I could be with you; hear one tone of your voice, catch one glance of your eye. I scarcely see the paper before me, my thoughts are so straggling and confused. Write to me one word, Falkland; one word, and I will lay it to my heart, and be happy.

FROM ERASMUS FALKLAND TO LADY EMILY MANDEVILLE.

—— Hotel, London.

I hasten to you, Emily—my own and only love. Your letter has restored me to life. To-morrow we shall meet.

It was with mingled feelings, alloyed and embittered, in spite of the burning hope which predominated over all, that Falkland returned to E——. He knew that he was near the completion of his most ardent wishes; that he was within the grasp of a prize which included all the thousand objects of ambition, into which, among other men, the desires are divided: the only dreams he had ventured to form for years were about to kindle into life. He had every reason to be happy;—such is the inconsistency of human nature, that he was almost wretched. The morbid melancholy, habitual to him, threw its colourings over every emotion and idea. He knew the character of the woman whose affections he had seduced; and he trembled to think of the doom to which he was about to condemn her. With this, there came over his mind a long train of dark and remorseful recollections. Emily was not the only one whose destruction he had prepared. All who had loved him, he had repaid with ruin; and *one*—the first—the fairest—and the most loved, with death.

That last remembrance, more bitterly than all, possessed him. It will be recollected that Falkland, in the letters which begin this work, speaking of the ties he had formed after the loss of his first love, says, that it was the senses, not the affections, that were engaged. Never, indeed, since her death, till he met Emily, had his *heart* been unfaithful to her memory. Alas! none but those who have cherished in their souls an image of

the death; who have watched over it for long and bitter years in secrecy and gloom; who have felt that it was to them as a holy and fairy spot which no eye but theirs could profane; who have filled all things with *recollections* as with a spell, and made the universe one wide mausoleum of the lost;—none but those can understand the mysteries of that regret which is shed over every after passion, though it be more burning and intense;—that sense of sacrilege with which we fill up the haunted recesses of the spirit with a new and a living idol, and perpetrate the last act of infidelity to that buried love, which the heavens that now receive her, the earth where we beheld her, tell us, with the unnumbered voices of Nature, to worship with the incense of our faith.

His carriage stopped at the lodge. The woman who opened the gates gave him the following note:—

"Mr. Mandeville is returned; I almost fear that he suspects our attachment. Julia says, that if you come again to E——, she will inform him. I dare not, dearest Falkland, see you here. What is to be done? I am very ill and feverish: my brain burns so, that I can think, feel, remember nothing, but the one thought, feeling, and remembrance—that through shame, and despite of guilt, in life, and till death, I am yours.

"E. M."

As Falkland read this note, his extreme and engrossing love for Emily doubled with each word: an instant before, and the certainty of seeing her had suffered his mind to be divided into a thousand objects; now, doubt united them once more into one.

He altered his route to L——, and despatched from thence a short note to Emily, imploring her to meet him that evening by the lake, in order to arrange their ultimate flight. Her answer was brief, and blotted with her tears; but it was assent.

During the whole of that day, at least from the moment she received Falkland's letter, Emily was scarcely sensible of a single idea: she sat still and motionless, gazing on vacancy, and seeing nothing within her mind, or in the objects which surrounded her, but one dreary blank. Sense, thought, feeling, even remorse, were congealed and frozen; and the tides of emotion were still, *but they were ice!*

As Falkland's servant had waited without to deliver the note to Emily, Mrs. St. John had observed him: her alarm and surprise only served to quicken her presence of mind. She intercepted Emily's answer under pretence of giving it herself to Falkland's servant. She read it, and her resolution was formed. After carefully resealing and delivering it to the servant, she went at once to Mr. Mandeville, and revealed Lady Emily's attachment to Falkland. In this act of treachery, she was solely instigated by her passions; and when Mandeville, roused from his wonted apathy to a paroxysm of indignation, thanked her again and again for the generosity of friendship which he imagined was all that actuated her communication, he dreamed not of the fierce and ungovernable jealousy which envied the very disgrace that her confession was intended to award. Well said the French enthusiast, "that the heart, the most serene to appearance, resembles that calm and glassy fountain which cherishes the monster of the Nile in the bosom of its waters." Whatever reward Mrs. St. John proposed to herself in this action, verily she has had the recompense that was her due. Those consequences of her treachery, which I hasten to relate, have ceased to others—to *her* they remain. Amidst the pleasures of dissipation, one reflection has rankled at her mind; one dark cloud has rested between the sunshine and her soul: like the murderer in Shakspeare, the revel where she fled for forgetfulness has teemed to her with

the spectres of remembrance. O thou untameable conscience! thou that never flatterest—thou that watchest over the human heart never to slumber or to sleep—it is thou that takest from us the present, barrest to us the future, and knittest the eternal chain that binds us to the rock and the vulture of the past!

The evening came on still and dark; a breathless and heavy apprehension seemed gathered over the air: the full large clouds lay without motion in the dull sky, from between which, at long and scattered intervals, the wan stars looked out; a double shadow seemed to invest the grouped and gloomy trees that stood unwaving in the melancholy horizon. The waters of the lake lay heavy and unagitated, as the sleep of death; and the broken reflections of the abrupt and winding banks rested upon their bosoms, like the dream-like remembrance of a former existence.

The hour of the appointment was arrived: Falkland stood by the spot, gazing upon the lake before him; his cheek was flushed, his hand was parched and dry with the consuming fire within him. His pulse beat thick and rapidly; the demon of evil passions was upon his soul. He stood so lost in his own reflections, that he did not for some moments perceive the fond and tearful eye which was fixed upon him: on that brow and lip, thought seemed always so beautiful, so divine, that to disturb its repose was like a profanation of something holy; and though Emily came towards him with a light and hurried step, she paused involuntarily to gaze upon that noble countenance which realized her earliest visions of the beauty and majesty of love. He turned slowly, and perceived her; he came to her with his own peculiar smile; he drew her to his bosom in silence; he pressed his lips to her forehead: she leaned upon his bosom, and forgot all but him. Oh! if there be one feeling which makes Love, even guilty Love, a god, it is the knowledge

that in the midst of this breathing world he reigns aloof and alone; and that those who are occupied with his worship know nothing of the pettiness, the strife, the bustle, which pollute and agitate the ordinary inhabitants of earth! What was now to them, as they stood alone in the deep stillness of nature, every thing that had engrossed them before they had met and loved? Even in her, the recollections of guilt and grief subsided: she was only sensible of one thought—the presence of the being who stood beside her,

That ocean to the rivers of her soul.

They sat down beneath an oak: Falkland stooped to kiss the cold and pale cheek that still rested upon his breast. His kisses were like lava: the turbulent and stormy elements of sin and desire were aroused even to madness within him. He clasped her still nearer to his bosom: her lips answered to his own: they caught perhaps something of the spirit which they received: her eyes were half-closed; the bosom heaved wildly that was pressed to his beating and burning heart. The skies grew darker and darker, as the night stole over them: one low roll of thunder broke upon the curtained and heavy air—*they* did not hear it; and yet it was the knell of peace—virtue—hope—lost, lost for ever to their souls!

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* * * * * *
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They separated as they had never done before. In Emily's bosom there was a dreary void—a vast blank—over which there went a low deep voice like a Spirit's—a sound indistinct and strange, that spoke a language she knew not; but felt that it told of woe—guilt—doom. Her senses were stunned: the vitality of her feelings was numbed and torpid: the first herald of despair is

insensibility. "To-morrow, then," said Falkland—and his voice for the first time seemed strange and harsh to her—"we will fly hence for ever: meet me at day-break—the carriage shall be in attendance—we cannot now unite too soon—would that at this very moment we were prepared!"—"To-morrow!" repeated Emily, "at day-break!" and as she clung to him, he felt her shudder: "to-morrow—ay—to-morrow!—" one kiss—one embrace—one word—*farewell*—and they parted.

Falkland returned to L——: a gloomy, foreboding rested upon his mind: that dim and indescribable fear, which no earthly or human cause can explain—that shrinking within self—that vague terror of the future—that grappling, as it were, with some unknown shade—that wandering of the spirit—whither?—that cold, cold creeping dread—of what? As he entered the house, he met his confidential servant. He gave him orders respecting the flight of the morrow, and then retired into the chamber where he slept. It was an antique and large room: the wainscot was of oak; and one broad and high window looked over the expanse of country which stretched beneath. He sat himself by the casement in silence—he opened it: the dull air came over his forehead, not with a sense of freshness, but, like the parching atmosphere of the east, charged with a weight and fever that sank heavy into his soul. He turned:—he threw himself upon the bed, and placed his hands over his face. His thoughts were scattered into a thousand indistinct forms, but over all, there was one rapturous remembrance; and that was, that the morrow was to unite him for ever to her whose possession had only rendered her more dear. Meanwhile, the hours rolled on; and as he lay thus silent and still, the clock of the distant church struck with a distinct and solemn sound upon his ear. It was the half-hour after midnight.

At that moment an icy thrill ran, slow and curdling, through his veins. His heart, as if with a presentiment of what was to follow, beat violently, and then stopped; life itself seemed ebbing away; cold drops stood upon his forehead; his eyelids trembled, and the balls reeled and glazed, like those of a dying man; a deadly fear gathered over him, so that his flesh quivered, and every hair in his head seemed instinct with a separate life, the very marrow of his bones crept, and his blood waxed thick and thick, as if stagnating into an ebbless and frozen substance. He started in a wild and unutterable terror. There stood, at the far end of the room, a dim and thin shape like moonlight, without outline or form; still, and indistinct, and shadowy. He gazed on, speechless and motionless; his faculties and senses seemed locked in an unnatural trance. By degrees the shape became clearer and clearer to his fixed and dilating eye. He saw, as through a floating and mist-like veil, the features of Emily; but how changed!—sunken, and hueless, and set in death. The dropping lip, from which there seemed to trickle a deep red stain like blood; the lead-like and lifeless eye; the calm, awful, mysterious repose which broods over the aspect of the dead;—all grew, as it were, from the hazy cloud that encircled them for one, one brief, agonizing, moment, and then as suddenly faded away. The spell passed from his senses. He sprang from the bed with a loud cry. All was quiet. There was not a trace of what he had witnessed. The feeble light of the skies rested upon the spot where the apparition had stood; upon that spot he stood also. He stamped upon the floor—it was firm beneath his footing. He passed his hands over his body—he was awake—he was unchanged: earth, air, heaven, were around him as before. What had thus gone over his soul to awe and overcome it to such weakness? To these questions his reason could return no answer. Bold by nature, and

sceptical by philosophy, his mind gradually recovered its original tone: he did not give way to conjecture; he endeavoured to discard it: he sought by natural causes to account for the apparition he had seen or imagined; and, as he felt the blood again circulating in its accustomed courses, and the night air coming chill over his feverish frame, he smiled with a stern and scornful bitterness at the terror which had so shaken, and the fancy which had so deluded, his mind.

Are there not "more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy?" A Spirit may hover in the air that we breathe: the depth of our most secret solitudes may be peopled by the invisible: our uprisings and our downsittings may be marked by a witness from the grave. In our walks the dead may be behind us; in our banquets they may sit at the board; and the chill breath of the night wind that stirs the curtains of our bed may bear a message our senses receive not, from lips that once have pressed kisses on our own! Why is it that at moments there creeps over us an awe, a terror, overpowering, but undefined? Why is it that we shudder without a cause, and feel the warm life-blood stand still in its courses? *Are the dead too near?* Do unearthly wings touch us as they flit around? Has our soul any intercourse which the body shares not, though it feels, with the supernatural world—mysterious revealings—unimaginable communion—a language of dread and power, shaking to its centre the fleshly barrier that divides the spirit from its race?

How fearful is the very life which we hold! We have our being beneath a cloud, and are a marvel even to ourselves. There is not a single thought which has its affixed limits. Like circles in the water, our researches weaken as they extend, and vanish at last into the immeasurable and unfathomable space of the vast unknown. We are like children in the dark; we tremble in a

shadowy and terrible void, peopled with our fancies! Life is our real night, and the first gleam of the morning, which brings us certainty, *is death*.

Falkland sat the remainder of that night by the window, watching the clouds become gray as the dawn rose, and its earliest breeze awoke. He heard the trampling of the horses beneath: he drew his cloak round him, and descended. It was on a turning of the road beyond the lodge that he directed the carriage to wait, and he then proceeded to the place appointed. Emily was not yet there. He walked to and fro with an agitated and hurried step. The impression of the night had in a great measure been effaced from his mind, and he gave himself up without reserve to the warm and sanguine hopes which he had so much reason to conceive. He thought too, at moments, of those bright climates beneath which he designed their asylum, where the very air is music, and the light is like the colourings of love; and he associated the sighs of a mutual rapture with the fragrance of myrtles, and the breath of a Tuscan heaven. Time glided on. The hour was long past, yet Emily came not! The sun rose, and Falkland turned in dark and angry discontent from its beams. With every moment his impatience increased, and at last he could restrain himself no longer. He proceeded towards the house. He stood for some time at a distance; but as all seemed still hushed in repose, he drew nearer and nearer till he reached the door: to his astonishment it was open. He saw forms passing rapidly through the hall. He heard a confused and indistinct murmur. At length he caught a glimpse of Mrs. St. John. He could command himself no more. He sprang forwards—entered the door—the hall—and caught her by a part of her dress. He could not speak, but his countenance said all which his lips refused. Mrs. St. John burst into tears when she saw him. "Good God!" she said, "why are you here? Is

it possible you have yet learned——" Her voice failed her. Falkland had by this time recovered himself. He turned to the servants who gathered around him. "Speak," he said calmly. "What has occurred?" "My lady—my lady!" burst at once from several tongues. "What of her?" said Falkland, with a blanched cheek, but unchanging voice. There was a pause. At that instant a man, whom Falkland recognised as the physician of the neighbourhood, passed at the opposite end of the hall. A light, a scorching and intolerable light, broke upon him. "She is dying—she is dead, perhaps," he said, in a low sepulchral tone, turning his eye around till it had rested upon every one present. *Not one answered.* He paused a moment, as if stunned by a sudden shock, and then sprang up the stairs. He passed the boudoir, and entered the room where Emily slept. The shutters were only partially closed: a faint light broke through, and rested on the bed; beside it bent two women. Them he neither heeded nor saw. He drew aside the curtains. He beheld—the same as he had seen it in his vision of the night before—the changed and lifeless countenance of Emily Mandeville! That face, still so tenderly beautiful, was partially turned towards him. Some dark stains upon the lip and neck told how she had died—the blood-vessel she had broken before had burst again. The bland and soft eyes, which for him never had but *one* expression, were closed; and the long and dishevelled tresses half hid, while they contrasted that bosom, which had but the night before first learned to thrill beneath his own. Happier in her fate than she deserved, she passed from this bitter life ere the punishment of her guilt had begun. She was not doomed to wither beneath the blight of shame, nor the coldness of estranged affection. From him whom she had so worshipped, she was not condemned to bear wrong nor change. She died

while his passion was yet in its spring—before a blossom, a leaf, had faded; and she sank to repose while his kiss was yet warm upon her lip, and her last breath almost mingled with his sigh. For the woman who has erred, life has no exchange for such a death. Falkland stood mute and motionless: not one word of grief or horror escaped his lips. At length he bent down. He took the hand which lay outside the bed; he pressed it; it replied not to the pressure, but fell cold and heavy from his own. He put his cheek to her lips; not the faintest breath came from them; and then for the first time a change passed over his countenance: he pressed upon those lips one long and last kiss, and, without word, or sign, or tear, he turned from the chamber. Two hours afterwards he was found senseless upon the ground: it was upon the spot where he had met Emily the night before.

For weeks he knew nothing of this earth—he was encompassed with the spectres of a terrible dream. All was confusion, darkness, horror—a series and a change of torture! At one time he was hurried through the heavens in the womb of a fiery star, girt above and below and around with unextinguishable but unconsuming flames. Wherever he trod, as he wandered through his vast and blazing prison, the molten fire was his footing, and the breath of fire was his air. Flowers, and trees, and hills were in that world as in ours, but wrought from one lurid and intolerable light; and, scattered around, rose gigantic palaces and domes of the living flame, like the mansions of the city of Hell. With every moment there passed to and fro shadowy forms, on whose countenances was engraven unutterable anguish; but not a shriek, not a groan, rung through the red air; *for the doomed, who fed and inhabited the flames, were forbidden the consolation of voice.* Above there sat, fixed and black, a solid and impenetrable

cloud—*Night frozen into substance;* and from the midst there hung a banner of a pale and sickly flame, on which was written "For Ever." A river rushed rapidly beside him. He stooped to slake the agony of his thirst—the waves *were waves of fire;* and, as he started from the burning draught, he longed to shriek aloud, *and could not.* Then he cast his despairing eyes above for mercy; and saw on the livid and motionless banner "For Ever."

A change came o'er the spirit of his dream:

He was suddenly borne upon the winds and storms to the oceans of an eternal winter. He fell stunned and unstruggling upon the ebbless and sluggish waves. Slowly and heavily they rose over him as he sank: then came the lengthened and suffocating torture of that drowning death—the impotent and convulsive contest with the closing waters—the gurgle, the choaking, the bursting of the pent breath,—the flutter of the heart, its agony, *and its stillness.* He recovered. He was a thousand fathoms beneath the sea, chained to a rock round which the heavy waters rose as a wall. He felt his own flesh rot and decay, perishing from his limbs piece by piece; and he saw the coral banks, which it requires a thousand ages to form, rise slowly from their slimy bed: and spread atom by atom, till they became a shelter for the leviathan: *their growth was his only record of eternity;* and ever and ever, around and above him, came vast and misshapen things—the wonders of the secret deeps; and the sea serpent, the huge chimæra of the north, made its resting-place by his side, glaring upon him with a livid and death-like eye, wan, yet burning *as an expiring sun.* But over all, in every change, in every moment of that immortality, there was present one pale and motionless countenance, never turning from his own. The fiends of hell, the monsters

of the hidden ocean, had no horror so awful *as the human face of the dead whom he had loved.*

The word of his sentence was gone forth. Alike through that delirium and its more fearful awakening, through the past, through the future, through the vigils of the joyless day, and the broken dreams of the night, there was a charm upon his soul—a hell within himself; and the curse of his sentence was—*never to forget!*

When Lady Emily returned home on that guilty and eventful night, she stole at once to her room: she dismissed her servant, and threw herself upon the ground in that deep despair which on this earth can never again know hope. She lay there without the power to weep, or the courage to pray—how long, she knew not. Like the period before creation, her mind was a chaos of jarring elements, and knew neither the method of reflection, nor the division of time.

As she rose, she heard a slight knock at the door, and her husband entered. Her heart misgave her; and when when she saw him close the door carefully before he approached her, she felt as if she could have sunk into the earth, alike from her internal shame, and her fear of its detection.

Mr. Mandeville was a weak, common-place character; indifferent in ordinary matters, but, like most imbecile minds, violent and furious when aroused. "Is this, Madam, addressed to you?" he cried, in a voice of thunder, as he placed a letter before her; (it was one of Falkland's) "and this, and this, Madam?" said he, in a still louder tone, as he flung them out one after another from her own escritoire, which he had broken open.

Emily sank back, and gasped for breath. Mandeville rose, and, laughing fiercely, seized her by the arm. He grasped it with all his force. She uttered a faint scream of terror: he did not heed it; he flung her from him,

and, as she fell upon the ground, the blood gushed in torrents from her lips. In the sudden change of feeling which alarm created, he raised her in his arms. *She was a corpse!* At that instant the clock struck upon his ear with a startling and solemn sound: *it was the half-hour after midnight!*

The grave is now closed upon that soft and erring heart, with its guiltiest secret unrevealed. She went to that last home with a blest and unblighted name; for her guilt was unknown, and her virtues are yet recorded in the memories of the Poor.

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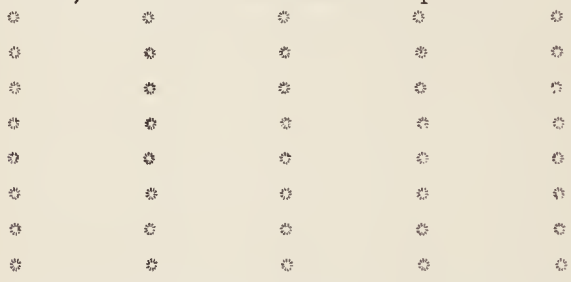
They laid her in the stately vaults of her ancient line, and her bier was honoured with tears from hearts not less stricken, because their sorrow, if violent, was brief. For the dead there are many mourners, but only one monument—the bosom which loved them *best.* The spot where the hearse rested, the green turf beneath, the surrounding trees, the gray tower of the village church, and the proud halls rising beyond,—all had witnessed the childhood, the youth, the bridal-day of the being whose last rites and solemnities they were to witness now. The very bell which rang for her birth had rung also for the marriage peal; it *now* tolled for her death. But a little while, and she had gone forth from that home of her young and unclouded years, amidst the acclamations and blessings of all, a bride, with the insignia of bridal pomp—in the first bloom of her girlish beauty—in the first innocence of her unawakened heart, weeping, not for the future she was entering, but for the past she was about to leave, and smiling through her tears, as if innocence had no business with grief. On the same spot, where he had then waved his farewell, stood the father now. On the grass which they had then covered, flocked the peasants whose wants her

childhood had relieved; by the same priest who had blessed her bridals, bent the bridegroom who had plighted its vow. There was not a tree, not a blade of grass withered. The day itself was bright and glorious; such was it when it smiled upon her nuptials. And *she*—*she*—but four little years, and all youth's innocence darkened, and earth's beauty come to dust! Alas! not for her, but the mourner whom she left! In death even love is forgotten; but in life there is no bitterness so utter as to feel every thing is unchanged, except the One Being who was the soul of all—to know *the world* is the same, but that *its sunshine* is departed.



The noon was still and sultry. Along the narrow street of the small village of Lodar poured the wearied but yet unconquered band, which embodied in that district of Spain the last hope and energy of freedom. The countenances of the soldiers were haggard and dejected; they displayed even less of the vanity, than their accoutrements exhibited of the pomp and circumstances of war. Yet their garments were such as even the peasants had disdained: covered with blood and dust, and tattered into a thousand rags, they betokened nothing of chivalry but its endurance of hardship; even the rent and sullied banners drooped sullenly along their staves, as if the winds themselves had become the minions of fortune, and disdained to swell the insignia of those whom she had deserted. The glorious music of battle was still. An air of dispirited and defeated

enterprise hung over the whole array. "Thank Heaven," said the chief, who closed the last file as it marched on to its scanty refreshment and brief repose; "thank Heaven, we are at least out of the reach of pursuit; and the mountains, those last retreats of liberty, are before us!" "True, Don Rafael," replied the youngest of two officers who rode by the side of the commander; "and if we can cut our passage to Mina, we may yet plant the standard of the Constitution in Madrid." "Ay," added the elder officer, "and sing Riego's hymn in the place of the Escurial!" "Our sons may!" said the chief, who was indeed Riego himself, "but for us—all hope is over! Were we united, we could scarcely make head against the armies of France; and divided as we are, the wonder is that we have escaped so long. Hemmed in by invasion, our great enemy has been ourselves. Such has been the hostility faction has created between Spaniard and Spaniard, that we seem to have none left to waste upon Frenchmen. We cannot establish freedom if men are willing to be slaves. We have no hope, Don Alphonso—no hope—but that of death!" As Riego concluded this desponding answer, so contrary to his general enthusiasm, the younger officer rode on among the soldiers, cheering them with words of congratulation and comfort; ordering their several divisions; cautioning them to be prepared at a moment's notice; and impressing on their remembrance those small but essential points of discipline, which a Spanish troop might well be supposed to disregard. When Riego and his companion entered the small and miserable hovel which constituted the head-quarters of the place, this man still remained without; and it was not till he had slackened the girths of his Andalusian horse, and placed before it the undainty provender which the *écurie* afforded that he thought of rebinding more firmly the bandages wound around a deep and painful sabre cut in the left

arm, which for several hours had been wholly neglected. The officer, whom Riego had addressed by the name of Alphonso, came out of the hut just as his comrade was vainly endeavoring, with his teeth and one hand, to replace the ligature. As he assisted him, he said, "You know not, my dear Falkland, how bitterly I reproach myself for having ever persuaded you to a cause where contest seems to have no hope, and danger no glory." Falkland smiled bitterly. "Do not deceive yourself, my dear uncle," said he; "your persuasions would have been unavailing but for the suggestions of my own wishes. I am not one of those enthusiasts who entered on your cause with high hopes and chivalrous designs: I asked but forgetfulness and excitement—I have found them! I would not exchange a single pain I have endured for what would have constituted the pleasures of other men:—but enough of this. What time, think you, have we for repose?" "Till the evening," answered Alphonso; "our route will then most probably be directed to the Sierra Morena. The General is extremely weak and exhausted, and needs a longer rest than we shall gain. It is singular that with such weak health he should endure so great an excess of hardship and fatigue." During this conversation they entered the hut. Riego was already asleep. As they seated themselves to the wretched provision of the place, a distant and indistinct noise was heard. It came first on their ears like the birth of the mountain wind—low, and hoarse, and deep: gradually it grew loud and louder, and mingled with other sounds which they defined too well—the hum, the murmur, the trampling of steeds, the ringing echoes of the rapid march of armed men! They heard and knew the foe was upon them!—a moment more, and the drum beat to arms. "By St. Pelagio," cried Riego, who had sprung from his light sleep at the first sound of the approaching danger, un-

willing to believe his fears, "it cannot be: the French are far behind:" and then, as the drum beat, his voice suddenly changed,—"the enemy! the enemy! D'Aguilar, to horse!" and with those words he rushed out of the hut. The soldiers, who had scarcely begun to disperse, were soon re-collected. In the mean while the French commander, D'Argout, taking advantage of the surprise he had occasioned, poured on his troops, which consisted solely of cavalry, undaunted and undelayed by the fire of the posts. On, on they drove like a swift cloud charged with thunder, and gathering wrath as it hurried by, before it burst in tempest on the beholders. They did not pause till they reached the farther extremity of the village: there the Spanish infantry were already formed into two squares. "Halt!" cried the French commander: the troop suddenly stopped, confronting the nearer square. There was one brief pause —the moment before the storm. "Charge!" said D'Argout, and the word rang throughout the line up to the clear and placid sky. Up flashed the steel like lightning; on went the troop like the dash of a thousand waves when the sun is upon them; and before the breath of the riders was thrice drawn, came the crash—the shock—the slaughter of battle. The Spaniards made but a faint resistance to the impetuosity of the onset: they broke on every side beneath the force of the charge, like the weak barriers of a rapid and swollen stream; and the French troops after a brief but bloody victory (joined by a second squadron from the rear), advanced immediately upon the Spanish cavalry. Falkland was by the side of Riego. As the troop advanced, it would have been curious to notice the contrast of expression in the face of each; the Spaniard's features lighted up with the daring enthusiasm of his nature; every trace of their usual languor and exhaustion vanished beneath the unconquerable soul that blazed

out the brighter for the debility of the frame; the brow knit; the eye flashing; the lip quivering:—and close beside, the calm, stern, passionless repose that brooded over the severe yet noble beauty of Falkland's countenance. To him danger brought scorn, not enthusiasm: he rather despised than defied it. "The dastards! they waver," said Riego, in an accent of despair, as his troop faltered beneath the charge of the French: and so saying, he spurred his steed on to the foremost line. The contest was longer, but not less decisive, than the one just concluded. The Spaniards, thrown into confusion by the first shock, never recovered themselves. Falkland, who, in his anxiety to rally and inspirit the soldiers, had advanced with two other officers beyond the ranks, was soon surrounded by a detachment of dragoons: the wound in his left arm scarcely suffered him to guide his horse: he was in the most imminent danger. At that moment D'Aguilar, at the head of his own immediate followers, cut his way into the circle, and covered Falkland's retreat; another detachment of the enemy came up, and they were a second time surrounded. In the mean while, the main body of the Spanish cavalry were flying in all directions, and Riego's deep voice was heard at intervals, through the columns of smoke and dust, calling and exhorting them in vain. D'Aguilar and his scanty troop, after a desperate skirmish, broke again through the enemy's line drawn up against their retreat. The rank closed after them, like waters when the object that pierced them has sunk: Falkland and his two companions were again environed: he saw his comrades cut to the earth before him. He pulled up his horse for one moment, clove down with one desperate blow the dragoon with whom he was engaged, and then setting his spurs to the very rowels into his horse, dashed at once through the circle of his foes. His remarkable presence of mind, and the strength

and sagacity of his horse, befriended him. Three sabres flashed before him, and glanced harmless from his raised sword, like lightning on the water. The circle was passed! As he galloped towards Riego, his horse started from a dead body that lay across his path. He reined up for one instant, for the countenance, which looked upwards, struck him as familiar. What was his horror, when in that livid and distorted face, he recognised his uncle! The thin grizzled hairs were besprent with gore and brains, and the blood yet oosed from the spot where the ball had passed through his temple. Falkland had but a brief interval for grief; the pursuers were close behind: he heard the snort of the foremost horse before he again put spurs into his own. Riego was holding a hasty consultation with his principal officers. As Falkland rode breathless up to them, they had decided on the conduct expedient to adopt. They led the remaining square of infantry towards the chain of mountains against which the village, as it were, leaned; and there the men dispersed in all directions. "For us," said Riego to the followers on horseback who gathered around him, "for us the mountains still promise a shelter. We must ride, gentlemen, for our lives —Spain will want *them* yet."

Wearied and exhausted as they were, that small and devoted troop fled on into the recesses of the mountains for the remainder of that day—twenty men out of the two thousand who had halted at Lodar. As the evening stole over them, they entered into a narrow defile: the tall hills rose on every side, covered with the glory of the setting sun, as if Nature rejoiced to grant her bulwarks as a protection to liberty. A small clear stream ran through the valley, sparkling with the last smile of the departing day; and ever and anon, from the scattered shrubs and the fragrant herbage, came the vesper music of the birds, and the hum of the wild bee.

Parched with thirst, and drooping with fatigue, the wanderers sprung forward with one simultaneous cry of joy to the glassy and refreshing wave which burst so unexpectedly upon them: and it was resolved that they should remain for some hours in a spot where all things invited them to the repose they so imperiously required. They flung themselves at once upon the grass; and such was their exhaustion, that rest was almost synonymous with sleep. Falkland alone could not immediately forget himself in repose: the face of his uncle, ghastly and disfigured, glared upon his eyes whenever he closed them. Just, however, as he was sinking into an unquiet and fitful doze, he heard steps approaching: he started up, and perceived two men, one a peasant, the other in the dress of a hermit. They were the first human beings the wanderers had met; and when Falkland gave the alarm to Riego, who slept beside him, it was immediately proposed to detain them as guides to the town of Carolina, where Riego had hopes of finding effectual assistance, or the means of ultimate escape. The hermit and his companion refused, with much vehemence, the office imposed upon them; but Riego ordered them to be forcibly detained. He had afterwards reason bitterly to regret this compulsion.

Midnight came on in all the gorgeous beauty of a southern heaven, and beneath its stars they renewed their march.

As Falkland rode by the side of Riego, the latter said to him in a low voice, "There is yet escape for you and my followers; none for me: they have set a price on my head, and the moment I leave these mountains, I enter upon my own destruction." "No, Rafael!" replied Falkland; "you can yet fly to England, that asylum of the free, though ally of the despotic; the abettor of tyranny, but the shelter of its victims!" Riego answered, with the same faint and dejected tone,

"I care not now what becomes of me! I have lived solely for Freedom; I have made her my mistress, my hope, my dream: I have no existence but in her. With the last effort of my country let me perish also! I have lived to view liberty not only defeated, but derided: I have seen its efforts not aided, but mocked. In my own country, those only, who wore it, have been respected who used it as a covering to ambition. In other nations, the free stood aloof when the charter of their own rights was violated in the invasion of ours. I cannot forget that the senate of that England, where you promise me a home, rang with insulting plaudits when her statesman breathed his ridicule on our weakness, not his sympathy for our cause; and I—*I*—fanatic—dreamer—enthusiast, as I may be called, whose whole life has been one unremitting struggle for the opinion I have adopted, am at least not so blinded by my infatuation, but I can see the mockery it incurs. If I die on the scaffold to-morrow, I shall have nothing of martyrdom but its doom; not the triumph—the incense—the immortality of popular applause: I should have no hope to support me at such a moment, gleaned from the glories of the future—nothing but one stern and prophetic conviction of the vanity of that tyranny by which my sentence will be pronounced." Riego paused for a moment before he resumed, and his pale and death-like countenance received an awful and unnatural light from the intensity of the feeling that swelled and burned within him. His figure was drawn up to its full height, and his voice rang through the lonely hills with a deep and hollow sound, that had in it a tone of prophecy, as he resumed: "It is in vain that they oppose OPINION; any thing else they may subdue. They may conquer wind, water, nature itself; but to the progress of that secret, subtle, pervading spirit, their imagination can devise, their strength can accom-

plish, no bar: *its votaries* they may seize, they may destroy; *itself* they cannot touch. If they check it in one place, it invades them in another. They cannot build a wall across the whole earth; and, even if they could, it would pass over its summit! Chains cannot bind it, for it is immaterial—dungeons enclose it, for it is universal. Over the faggot and the scaffold—over the bleeding bodies of its defenders which they pile against its path, it sweeps on with a noiseless but unceasing march. Do they levy armies against it, it presents to them no palpable object to oppose. *Its camp is the universe; its asylum is the bosoms of their own soldiers.* Let them depopulate, destroy as they please, to each extremity of the earth; but as long as they have a single supporter themselves—as long as they leave a single individual into whom that spirit can enter—so long they will have the same labours to encounter, and the same enemy to subdue."

As Riego's voice ceased, Falkland gazed upon him with a mingled pity and admiration. Sour and ascetic as was the mind of that hopeless and disappointed man, he felt somewhat of a kindred glow at the pervading and holy enthusiasm of the patriot to whom he had listened; and though it was the character of his own philosophy to question the purity of human motives, and to smile at the more vivid emotions he had ceased to feel, he bowed his soul in homage to those principles whose sanctity he acknowledged, and to that devotion of zeal and fervour with which their defender cherished and enforced them. Falkland had joined the constitutionalists with respect, but not ardour, for their cause. He demanded excitation; he cared little where he found it. He stood in this world a being who mixed in all its changes, performed all its offices, took, as if by the force of superior mechanical power, a leading share in its events; but whose thoughts and soul were as off-

springs of another planet, imprisoned in a human form, and *longing for their home!*

As they rode on, Riego continued to converse with that imprudent unreserve which the openness and warmth of his nature made natural to him: not one word escaped the hermit and the peasant (whose name was Lopez Lara) as they rode on two mules behind Falkland and Riego. "Remember," whispered the hermit to his comrade, "the reward!" "I do," muttered the peasant.

Throughout the whole of that long and dreary night, the wanderers rode on incessantly, and found themselves at daybreak near a farm-house: this was Lara's own home. They made the peasant Lara knock; his own brother opened the door. Fearful as they were of the detection to which so numerous a party might conduce, only Riego, another officer (Don Luis de Sylva), and Falkland entered the house. The latter, whom nothing ever seemed to render weary or forgetful, fixed his cold stern eye upon the two brothers, and, seeing some signs pass between them, locked the door, and so prevented their escape. For a few hours they reposed in the stables with their horses, their drawn swords by their sides. On waking, Riego found it absolutely necessary that his horse should be shod. Lopez started up, and offered to lead it to Arguillas for that purpose. "No," said Riego, who, though naturally imprudent, partook in this instance of Falkland's habitual caution: "your brother shall go and bring hither the farrier." Accordingly the brother went: he soon returned. "The farrier," he said, "was already on the road." Riego and his companions, who were absolutely fainting with hunger, sat down to breakfast; but Falkland, who had finished first, and who had eyed the man since his return with the most scrutinising attention, withdrew towards the window, looking out from time to time with a telescope which they had carried about them, and urging

them impatiently to finish. "Why?" said Riego, "famished men are good for nothing, either to fight or fly—and we *must* wait for the farrier." "True," said Falkland, "but——" he stopped abruptly. Sylva had his eyes on his face at that moment. Falkland's colour suddenly changed: he turned round with a loud cry. "Up! up! Riego! Sylva! We are undone—the soldiers are upon us!" "Arm!" cried Riego, starting up. At that moment Lopez and his brother seized their own carbines, and levelled them at the betrayed constitutionalists. "The first who moves," cried the former, "is a dead man!" "Fools!" said Falkland, with a calm bitterness, advancing deliberately towards them. He moved only three steps—Lopez fired. Falkland staggered a few paces, recovered himself, sprang towards Lara, clove him at one blow from the skull to the jaw, and fell, with his victim, lifeless upon the floor. "Enough!" said Riego to the remaining peasant; "we are your prisoners; bind us!" In two minutes more the soldiers entered, and they were conducted to Carolina. Fortunately Falkland was known, when at Paris, to a French officer of high rank then at Carolina. He was removed to the Frenchman's quarters. Medical aid was instantly procured. The first examination of his wound was decisive; recovery was hopeless!

Night came on again, with her pomp of light and shade—the night that for Falkland had no morrow. One solitary lamp burned in the chamber where he lay alone with God and his own heart. He had desired his couch to be placed by the window, and requested his

attendants to withdraw. The gentle and balmy air stole over him, as free and bland as if it were to breathe for him for ever; and the silver moonlight came gleaming through the lattice, and played upon his wan brow, like the tenderness of a bride that sought to kiss him to repose. "In a few hours," thought he, as he lay gazing on the high stars which seemed such silent witnesses of an eternal and unfathomed mystery, "in a few hours either this feverish and wayward spirit will be at rest for ever, or it will have commenced a new career in an untried and unimaginable existence! In a very few hours I may be amongst the very heavens that I survey —a part of their own glory—a new link in a new order of beings—breathing amidst the elements of a more gorgeous world—arrayed myself in the attributes of a purer and diviner nature—a wanderer among the planets —an associate of angels—the beholder of the arcana of the great God—redeemed, regenerate, immortal, or—*dust!*

"There is no Œdipus to solve the enigma of life. We are—whence came we? We are *not*—whither do we go? All things *in* our existence have their object; existence has none. We live, move, beget our species, perish—and *for what?* We ask the past its moral; we question the gone years of the reason of our being, and from the clouds of a thousand ages there goes forth no answer. Is it merely to pant beneath this weary load; to sicken of the sun; to grow old; to drop like leaves into the grave; and to bequeath to our heirs the worn garments of toil and labour that we leave behind? Is it to sail for ever on the same sea, ploughing the ocean of time with new furrows, and feeding its billows with new wrecks, or ——" and his thoughts paused, blinded and bewildered.

No man, in whom the mind has not been broken by the decay of the body, has approached death in full consciousness, as Falkland did that moment, and not thought

intensely on the change he was about to undergo; and yet what new discoveries upon that subject has any one bequeathed us? There the wildest imaginations are driven from originality into triteness: there all minds, the frivolous and the strong, the busy and the idle, are compelled into the same path and limit of reflection. Upon that unknown and voiceless gulf of inquiry broods an eternal and impenetrable gloom; no wind breathes over it—no wave agitates its stillness: over the dead and solemn calm there is no change propitious to adventure—there goes forth no vessel of research, which is not driven, baffled and broken, again upon the shore.

The moon waxed high in her career. Midnight was gathering slowly over the earth: the beautiful, the mystic hour, blent with a thousand memories, hallowed by a thousand dreams, made tender to remembrance by the vows our youth breathed beneath its star, and solemn by the olden legends which are linked to its majesty and peace—*the hour in which men should die;* the isthmus between two worlds; the climax of the past day; the verge of that which is to come; wrapping us in sleep after a weary travail, and promising us a morrow *which since the first birth of Creation has never failed.* As the minutes glided on, Falkland felt himself grow gradually weaker and weaker. The pain of his wound had ceased, but a deadly sickness gathered over his heart: the room reeled before his eyes, and the damp chill mounted from his feet up—up to the breast in which the life-blood waxed dull and thick.

As the hand of the clock pointed *to the half-hour after midnight,* the attendants who waited in the adjoining room heard a faint cry. They rushed hastily into Falkland's chamber; they found him stretched half out of the bed. His hand was raised towards the opposite wall; it dropped gradually as they approached him; and his brow, which was at first stern and bent, softened

shade by shade, into his usual serenity. But the dim film gathered fast over his eye, and the last coldness upon his limbs. He strove to raise himself as if to speak; the effort failed, and he fell motionless on his face. They stood by the bed for some moments in silence: at length they raised him. Placed against his heart was an open locket of dark hair, which one hand still pressed convulsively. They looked upon his countenance—(a single glance was sufficient)—it was hushed —proud—passionless—the seal of Death was upon it!"

ZICCI.

ZICCI.

A TALE.

CHAPTER I.

In the gardens at Naples, one summer evening in the last century, some four or five gentlemen were seated under a tree, drinking their sherbet, and listening, in the intervals of conversation, to the music which enlivened that gay and favourite resort of an indolent population. One of this little party was a young Englishman, who had been the life of the whole group, but who, for the last few moments, had sunk into a gloomy and abstracted reverie. One of his countrymen observed this sudden gloom, and tapping him on the back, said, "Glyndon, why, what ails you—are you ill? you have grown quite pale—you tremble—is it a sudden chill? You had better go home; these Italian nights are often dangerous to our English constitutions."

"No, I am well now—it was but a passing shudder; I cannot account for it myself."

A man apparently of about thirty years of age, and of a mien and countenance strikingly superior to those around him, turned abruptly, and looked steadfastly at Glyndon.

"I think I understand what you mean," said he; "and perhaps," he added, with a grave smile, "I could explain it better than yourself." Here, turning to the

others, he added, "You must often have felt, gentlemen—each and all of you—especially when sitting alone at night, a strange and unaccountable sensation of coldness and awe creep over you; your blood curdles, and the heart stands still; the limbs shiver, the hair bristles; you are afraid to look up, to turn your eyes to the darker corners of the room; you have a horrible fancy that something unearthly is at hand; presently the whole spell, if I may so call it, passes away, and you are ready to laugh at your own weakness. Have you not often felt what I have thus imperfectly described? If so, you can understand what our young friend has just experienced, even amidst the delights of this magical scene, and amidst the balmy whispers of a July night."

"Sir," replied Glyndon, evidently much surprised, "you have defined exactly the nature of that shudder which came over me. But how could my manner be so faithful an index to my impressions?"

"I know the signs of the visitation," returned the stranger, gravely; "they are not to be mistaken by one of my experience."

All the gentlemen present then declared that they could comprehend, and had felt, what the stranger had described.

"According to one of our national superstitions," said Merton, the Englishman who had first addressed Glyndon, "the moment you so feel your blood creep, and your hair stand on end, some one is walking over the spot which shall be your grave."

"There are in all lands different superstitions to account for so common an occurrence," replied the stranger; "one sect among the Arabians hold that at that instant God is deciding the hour either of your death or that of some one dear to you. The African savage, whose imagination is darkened by the hideous rites of his gloomy idolatry, believes that the Evil Spirit

is pulling you towards him by the hair;—so do the Grotesque and the Terrible mingle with each other."

"It is evidently a mere physical accident—a derangement of the stomach—a chill of the blood," said a young Neapolitan.

"Then why is it always coupled in all nations with some superstitious presentiment or terror—some connection between the material frame and the supposed world without us?" asked the stranger. "For my part, I think——"

"What do you think, sir?" asked Glyndon, curiously.

"I think," continued the stranger, "that it is the repugnance and horror of that which is human about us—to something, indeed, invisible, but antipathetic to our own nature; and from a knowledge of which we are happily secured by the imperfection of our senses."

"You are a believer in spirits, then?" asked Merton, with an incredulous smile.

"Nay, I said not so; I can form no notion of a spirit, as the metaphysicians do, and certainly no fear of one; but there may be forms of matter as invisible and impalpable to us as the animalculæ to which I have compared them. The monster that lives and dies in a drop of water—carnivorous—insatiable—subsisting on the creatures minuter than himself, is not less deadly in his wrath, less ferocious in his nature, than the tiger of the desert. There may be things around us malignant and hostile to men, if Providence had not placed a wall between them and us, merely by different modifications of matter."

"And could that wall never be removed?" asked young Glyndon, abruptly. "Are the traditions of sorcerer and wizard, universal and immemorial as they are, merely fables?"

"Perhaps yes; perhaps no," answered the stranger, indifferently. "But who, in an age in which the reason

has chosen its proper bounds, would be mad enough to break the partition that divides him from the boa and the lion, to repine at and rebel against the law of nature, which confines the shark to the great deep? Enough of these idle speculations."

Here the stranger rose, summoned the attendant, paid for his sherbet, and, bowing slightly to the company, soon disappeared among the trees.

"Who is that gentleman?" asked Glyndon, eagerly.

The rest looked at each other, without replying, for some moments.

"I never saw him before," said Merton, at last.

"Nor I."

"Nor I."

"I have met him often," said the Neapolitan, who was named Count Cetoxa; "it was, if you remember, as my companion that he joined you. He has been some months at Naples; he is very rich—indeed, enormously so. Our acquaintance commenced in a strange way."

"How was it?"

"I had been playing at a public gaming-house, and had lost considerably. I rose from the table, resolved no longer to tempt Fortune, when this gentleman, who had hitherto been a spectator, laying his hand on my arm, said, with politeness, 'Sir, I see you enjoy play—I dislike it; but I yet wish to have some interest in what is going on. Will you play this sum for me? the risk is mine—the half-profits yours.' I was startled, as you may suppose, at such an address; but the stranger had an air and tone with him it was impossible to resist; besides, I was burning to recover my losses, and should not have risen had I any money left about me. I told him I would accept his offer, provided we shared the risk as well as profits. 'As you will,' said he, smiling, 'we need have no scruple, for you will be sure to win.' I sate down; the stranger stood behind me; my luck

rose; I invariably won. In fact, I rose from the table a rich man."

"There can be no foul play at the public tables, especially when foul play would make against the bank."

"Certainly not," replied the Count. "But our good fortune was indeed marvellous—so extraordinary that a Sicilian (the Sicilians are all ill-bred, bad-tempered fellows) grew angry and insolent. 'Sir,' said he, turning to my new friend, 'you have no business to stand so near to the table. I do not understand this; you have not acted fairly.' The spectator replied with great composure, that he had done nothing against the rules—that he was very sorry that one man could not win without another man losing; and that he could not act unfairly even if disposed to do so. The Sicilian took the stranger's mildness for apprehension, blustered more loudly, and at length fairly challenged him. 'I never seek a quarrel, and I never shun a danger,' returned my partner; and six or seven of us adjourned to the garden behind the house. I was, of course, my partner's second. He took me aside. 'This man will die,' said he; 'see that he is buried privately in the church of St. Januario, by the side of his father.'

"'Did you know his family?' I asked with great surprise. He made no answer, but drew his sword, and walked deliberately to the spot we had selected. The Sicilian was a renowned swordsman; nevertheless, in the third pass he was run through the body. I went up to him; he could scarcely speak. 'Have you any request to make—any affairs to settle?' He shook his head. 'Where would you wish to be interred?' He pointed towards the Sicilian coast. 'What!' said I, in surprise, 'not by the side of your father?' As I spoke his face altered terribly—he uttered a piercing shriek;—the blood gushed from his mouth—and he fell dead. The most strange part of the story is to come.

We buried him in the church of St. Januario. In doing so, we took up his father's coffin; the lid came off in moving it, and the skeleton was visible. In the hollow of the skull we found a very slender wire of sharp steel; this caused great surprise and inquiry. The father, who was rich and a miser, had died suddenly, and been buried in haste, owing, it was said, to the heat of the weather. Suspicion once awakened, the examination became minute. The old man's servant was questioned, and at last confessed that the son had murdered the sire: the contrivance was ingenious; the wire was so slender, that it pierced to the brain, and drew but one drop of blood, which the grey hairs concealed. The accompliee was executed."

"And this stranger,—did he give evidence? did he account for——"

"No," interrupted the Count; "he declared that he had by accident visited the church that morning; that he had observed the tombstone of the Count Salvolio; that his guide had told him the Count's son was in Naples,—a spendthrift and a gambler. While we were at play, he had heard the Count mentioned by name at the table; and when the challenge was given and accepted, it had occurred to him to name the place of burial, by an instinct he could not account for."

"A very lame story," said Merton.

"Yes! but we Italians are superstitious;—the alleged instinct was regarded as the whisper of Providence—the stranger became an object of universal interest and curiosity. His wealth, his manner of living, his extraordinary personal beauty, have assisted also to make him the rage."

"What is his name?" asked Glyndon.

"Zicci. Signor Zicci."

"Is it not an Italian name? He speaks English like a native."

"So he does French and German, as well as Italian, to my knowledge. But he declares himself a Corsican by birth, though I cannot hear of any eminent Corsican family of that name. However, what matters his birth or parentage; he is rich, generous, and the best swordsman I ever saw in my life. Who would affront him?"

"Not I, certainly," said Merton, rising. "Come, Glyndon; shall we seek our hotel? It is almost daylight. Adieu, signor."

"What think you of this story?" said Glyndon, as the young men walked homeward.

"Why, it is very clear that this Zicci is some impostor —some clever rogue; and the Neapolitan shares booty, and puffs him off with all the hacknied charlatanism of the marvellous. An unknown adventurer gets into society, by being made an object of awe and curiosity; —he is devilish handsome; and the women are quite content to receive him without any other recommendation than his own face and Cetoxa's fables."

"I cannot agree with you. Cetoxa, though a gambler and a rake, is a nobleman of birth and high repute for courage and honour. Besides, this stranger, with his grand features and lofty air—so calm—so unobtrusive —has nothing in common with the forward garrulity of an impostor."

"My dear Glyndon, pardon me; but you have not yet acquired any knowledge of the world: the stranger makes the best of a fine person, and his *grand air* is but a trick of the trade. But to change the subject:—how gets on the love affair?"

"O, Isabel could not see me to-night. The old woman gave me a note of excuse."

"You must not marry her; what would they all say at home?"

"Let us enjoy the present," said Glyndon, with

vivacity; "we are young, rich, good-looking: let us not think of to-morrow."

"Bravo, Glyndon! Here we are at the hotel. Sleep sound, and don't dream of Signor Zicci."

CHAPTER II.

Clarence Glyndon was a young man of small but independent fortune. He had, early in life, evinced considerable promise in the art of painting; and, rather from enthusiasm than the want of a profession, he had resolved to devote himself to a career which in England has been seldom entered upon by persons who can live on their own means. Without being a poet, Glyndon had also manifested a graceful faculty for verse, which had contributed to win his entry into society above his birth. Spoiled and flattered from his youth upward, his natural talents were in some measure relaxed by indolence, and that worldly and selfish habit of thought which frivolous companionship often engenders, and which is withering alike to stern virtue and high genius. The luxuriance of his fancy was unabated; but the affections which are the life of fancy had grown languid and inactive: his youth, his vanity, and a restless daring and thirst of adventure had from time to time involved him in dangers and dilemmas, out of which, of late, he had always extricated himself with the ingenious felicity of a clever head and cool heart. He had left England for Rome with the avowed purpose and sincere resolution of studying the divine masterpieces of art; but pleasure had soon allured him from ambition, and he quitted the gloomy palaces of Rome for the gay shores and animated revelries of Naples. Here he had fallen in love—deeply in love, as he said and thought—with a young person celebrated at Naples—Isabel di Pisani. She was the only daughter of an Italian, by an English

mother: the father had known better days; in his prosperity he had travelled, and won in England the affections of a lady of some fortune. He had been induced to speculate; he lost his all; he settled at Naples, and taught languages and music. His wife died when Isabel, christened from her mother, was ten years old. At sixteen she came out on the stage; two years afterwards her father departed this life, and Isabel was an orphan.

Glyndon, a man of pleasure, and a regular attendant at the theatre, had remarked the young actress behind the scenes; he fell in love with her, and he told her so. The girl listened to him perhaps from vanity, perhaps from ambition, perhaps from coquetry;—she listened, and allowed but few stolen interviews, in which she permitted no favour to the Englishman; it was one reason why he loved her so much.

The day following that on which our story opens Glyndon was riding alone by the shores of the Neapolitan sea, on the other side of the Cavern of Pausilippo. It was past noon; the sun had lost its early fervour and a cool breeze sprang voluptuously from the sparkling sea. Bending over a fragment of stone near the roadside he perceived the form of a man; and when he approached he recognised Zicci.

The Englishman saluted him courteously. "Have you discovered some antique?" said he, with a smile; "they are as common as pebbles on this road."

"No," replied Zicci; "it was but one of those antiques that have their date, indeed, from the beginning of the world, but which Nature eternally withers and renews." So saying, he showed Glyndon a small herb, with a pale blue flower, and then placed it carefully in his bosom.

"You are a herbalist?"

"I am."

"It is, I am told, a study full of interest."

"To those who understand it, doubtless. But," continued Zicci, looking up with a slight and cold smile, "why do you linger on your way to converse with me on matters in which you neither have knowledge nor desire to obtain it? I read your heart, young Englishman; your curiosity is excited; you wish to know *me*, and not this humble herb. Pass on; your desire never can be satisfied."

"You have not the politeness of your countrymen," said Glyndon, somewhat discomposed. "Suppose I were desirous to cultivate your acquaintance, why should you reject my advances?"

"I reject no man's advances," answered Zicci; "I must know them if they so desire; but *me*, in return they can never comprehend. If you ask my acquaintance, it is yours; but I would warn you to shun me."

"And why are you then so dangerous?"

"Some have found me so: if I were to predict your fortune by the vain calculations of the astrologer, I should tell you in their despicable jargon that my planet sat darkly in your house of life. Cross me not if you can avoid it. I warn you now for the first time and last."

"You despise the astrologers, yet you utter a jargon as mysterious as theirs. I neither gamble nor quarrel; why then should I fear you?"

"As you will; I have done."

"Let me speak frankly; your conversation last night interested and amused me."

"I know it; minds like yours are attracted by mystery." Glyndon was piqued at those words, though in the tone in which they were spoken there was no contempt.

"I see you do not consider me worthy of your friendship;—be it so. Good day." Zicci coldly replied to

the salutation; and, as the Englishman rode on, returned to his botanical employment.

The same night, Glyndon went, as usual, to the theatre. He was standing behind the scenes watching Isabel, who was on the stage in one of her most brilliant parts. The house resounded with applause. Glyndon was transported with a young man's passion and a young man's pride :—"This glorious creature," thought he, "may yet be mine."

He felt, while thus wrapt in delicious reverie, a slight touch upon his shoulder : he turned, and beheld Zicci. "You are in danger," said the latter. "Do not walk home to-night; or if you do, go not alone."

Before Glyndon recovered from his surprise, Zicci disappeared; and when the Englishman saw him again, he was in the box of one of the Neapolitan ministers, where Glyndon could not follow him.

Isabel now left the stage, and Glyndon accosted her with impassioned gallantry. The actress was surprisingly beautiful: of fair complexion, and golden hair, her countenance was relieved from the tame and gentle loveliness which the Italians suppose to be the characteristics of English beauty, by the contrast of dark eyes and lashes, by a forehead of great height, to which the dark outline of the eyebrows gave something of majesty and command. In spite of the slightness of virgin youth, her proportions had the nobleness, blent with the delicacy, that belongs to the masterpieces of ancient sculpture; and there was a conscious pride in her step, and in the swanlike bend of her stately head, as she turned with an evident impatience from the address of her lover. Taking aside an old woman, who was her constant and confidential attendant at the theatre, she said in an earnest whisper—

"Oh, Gionetta! he is here again! I have seen him again!—and again, he alone of the whole theatre with-

holds from me his applause. He scarcely seems to notice me; his indifference mortifies me to the soul;—I could weep for rage and sorrow."

"Which is he, my darling?" said the old woman with fondness in her voice. "He must be dull—not worth thy thoughts."

The actress drew Gionetta nearer to the stage, and pointed out to her a man in one of the nearer boxes, conspicuous amongst all else by the simplicity of his dress, and the extraordinary beauty of his features.

"Not worth a thought, Gionetta!" repeated Isabel —"not worth a thought! Saw you ever one so noble, so godlike?"

"By the Holy Mother!" answered Gionetta, "he is a proper man, and has the air of a prince."

The prompter summoned the Signora Pisani. "Find out his name, Gionetta," said she, sweeping on to the stage, and passing by Glyndon, who gazed at her with a look of sorrowful reproach.

The scene on which the actress now entered was that of the final catastrophe, wherein all her remarkable powers of voice and art were pre-eminently called forth. The house hung on every word with breathless worship; but the eyes of Isabel sought only those of one calm and unmoved spectator; she exerted herself as if inspired. The stranger listened, and observed her with an attentive gaze, but no approval escaped his lips; no emotion changed the expression of his cold and half-disdainful aspect. Isabel, who was in the character of a jealous and abandoned mistress, never felt so acutely the part she played. Her tears were truthful;—her passion that of nature: it was almost too terrible to behold. She was borne from the stage exhausted and insensible, amidst such a tempest of admiring rapture, as Continental audiences alone can raise. The crowd stood up —handkerchiefs waved—garlands and flowers were

thrown on the stage—men wiped their eyes, and women sobbed aloud.

"By heavens!" said a Neapolitan of great rank, "she has fired me beyond endurance. To-night, this very night, she shall be mine! You have arranged all, Mascari?"

"All, signor. And if this young Englishman should accompany her home?"

"The presuming barbarian! At all events, let him bleed for his folly. I hear that she admits him to secret interviews. I will have no rival."

"But an Englishman! There is always a search after the bodies of the English."

"Fool! is not the sea deep enough, or the earth secret enough, to hide one dead man? Our ruffians are silent as the grave itself:—and I—who would dare to suspect, to arraign the Prince de——? See to it—let him be watched, and the fitting occasion taken. I trust him to you:—robbers murder him;—you understand;—the country swarms with them;—plunder and strip him. Take three men; the rest shall be my escort."

Mascari shrugged his shoulders, and bowed submissively.

Meanwhile Glyndon besought Isabel, who recovered but slowly, to return home in his carriage.* She had done so once or twice before, though she had never permitted him to accompany her. This time she refused, and with some petulance. Glyndon, offended, was retiring sullenly, when Gionetta stopped him. "Stay, signor," said she, coaxingly; "the dear signora is not well—do not be angry with her; I will make her accept your offer."

Glyndon stayed, and after a few moments spent in

* At that time in Naples, carriages were both cheaper to hire, and more necessary for strangers, than they are now.

expostulation on the part of Gionetta and resistance on that of Isabel, the offer was accepted: the actress, with a mixture of *naïveté* and coquetry, gave her hand to her lover, who kissed it with delight. Gionetta and her charge entered the carriage, and Glyndon was left at the door of the theatre, to return home on foot. The mysterious warning of Zicci then suddenly occurred to him; he had forgotten it in the interest of his lover's quarrel with Isabel. He thought it now advisable to guard against danger foretold by lips so mysterious; he looked round for someone he knew; the theatre was disgorging its crowds, who hustled and jostled and pressed upon him; but he recognised no familiar countenances. While pausing irresolute he heard Merton's voice calling on him, and, to his great relief, discovered his friend making his way through the throng.

"I have secured you a place in the Count Cetoxa's carriage," said he. "Come along, he is waiting for us."

"How kind in you! how did you find me out?"

"I met Zicci in the passage. 'Your friend is at the door of the theatre,' said he; 'do not let him go home alone to-night: the streets of Naples are not always safe.' I immediately remembered that some of the Calabrian bravos had been busy within the city the last few weeks, and asked Cetoxa, who was with me, to accompany you."

Further explanation was forbidden, for they now joined the Court. As Glyndon entered the carriage and drew up the glass, he saw four men standing apart by the pavement, who seemed to eye him with attention.

"*Cospetto!*" cried one—"*ecco Inglese!*" Glyndon imperfectly heard the exclamation as the carriage drove on. He reached home in safety.

"Have you discovered who he is?" asked the

actress, as she was now alone in the carriage with Gionetta.

"Yes, he is the celebrated Signor Zicci, about whom the Court has run mad. They say he is so rich!—oh, so much richer than any of the Inglese! But a bird in the hand, my angel, is better than—"

"Cease," interrupted the young actress. "Zicci, speak of the Englishman no more."

The carriage was now entering that more lonely and remote part of the city in which Isabel's house was situated, when it suddenly stopped.

Gionetta, in alarm, thrust her head out of window, and perceived by the pale light of the moon that the driver, torn from his seat, was already pinioned in the arms of two men; the next moment the door was opened violently, and a tall figure, masked and mantled, appeared.

"Fear not, fairest Pisani," said he, gently, "no ill shall befall you." As he spoke, he wound his arms round the form of the fair actress, and endeavoured to lift her from the carriage. But the Signora Pisani was not an ordinary person; she had been before exposed to all the dangers to which the beauty of the low-born was subjected amongst a lawless and profligate nobility; she thrust back the assailant with a power that surprised him, and in the next moment the blade of a dagger gleamed before his eyes. "Touch me," said she, drawing herself to the farther end of the carriage, "and I strike!"

The mask drew back.

"By the body of Bacchus, a bold spirit!" said he, half laughing and half alarmed. "Here, Luigi—Giovanni! disarm and seize her.—Harm her not."

The mask retired from the door, and another and yet taller form presented itself. "Be calm, Isabel di Pisani," said he in a low voice; "with me you are indeed safe!"

He lifted his mask as he spoke, and showed the noble features of Zicci. "Be calm, be hushed,—I can save you." He vanished, leaving Isabel lost in surprise, agitation, and delight. There were in all nine masks: two were engaged with the driver; one stood at the head of the carriage horses; a third guarded the well-trained steeds of the party; three others, besides Zicci, and the one who had first accosted Isabel, stood apart by a carriage drawn to the side of the road. To these Zicci motioned: they advanced; he pointed towards the first mask, who was in fact the Prince di ——, and, to his unspeakable astonishment, the Prince was suddenly seized from behind.

"Treason!" he cried. "Treason among my own men! What means this?"

"Place him in his carriage! If he resist, shoot him!" said Zicci calmly.

He approached the men who had detained the coachman.

"You are outnumbered and outwitted," said he: "join your lord; you are three men—we six, armed to the teeth. Thank our mercy that we spare your lives; —go!"

The men gave way, dismayed. The driver remounted.

"Cut the traces of their carriage and the bridles of their horses," said Zicci, as he entered the vehicle containing Isabel, and which now drove on rapidly, leaving the discomfited ravisher in a state of rage and stupor impossible to describe.

"Allow me to explain this mystery to you," said Zicci. "I discovered the plot against you—no matter how. I frustrated it thus:—The head of this design is a nobleman, who has long persecuted you in vain. He and two of his creatures watched you from the entrance of the theatre, having directed six others to await him on the spot where you were attacked; myself and five

of my servants supplied their place, and were mistaken for his own followers. I had previously ridden alone to the spot where the men were waiting and informed them that their master would not require their services that night. They believed me—for I showed them his signet ring—and accordingly dispersed. I then joined my own band, whom I had left in the rear; you know all. We are at your door."

CHAPTER III.

Zicci was left alone with the young Italian; she had thrown aside her cloak and head gear; her hair, somewhat dishevelled, fell down her ivory neck, which the dress partially displayed; she seemed, as she sate in that low and humble chamber, a very vision of light and glory.

Zicci gazed at her with an admiration mingled with compassion; he muttered a few words to himself, and then addressed her aloud:—

"Isabel di Pisani, I have saved you from a great peril; not from dishonour only; but, perhaps, from death. The Prince di ——, under the weak government of a royal child and a venal administration, is a man above the law. He is capable of every crime; but amongst his passions he has such prudence as belongs to ambition; if you were not to reconcile yourself to your shame you would never enter the world again to tell your tale. The ravisher has no heart for repentance, but he has a hand that can murder. I have saved thee, Isabel di Pisani. Perhaps you would ask me wherefore?" Zicci paused and smiled mournfully, as he added, "My life is not that of others, but I am still human; I know pity, and more, Isabel, I can feel gratitude for affection. You love me; it was my fate to fascinate your eye, to arouse your vanity, to inflame your imagination. It was to warn you from this folly that I consented for a few minutes to become your guest. The Englishman, Glyndon, loves thee well—better than I can ever love; he may wed thee—he may bear thee to his

own free and happy land, the land of thy mother's kin. Forget me, teach thyself to return and to deserve his love; and I tell thee that thou wilt be honoured and be happy."

Isabel listened with silent wonder and deep blushes to this strange address; and when the voice ceased, she covered her face with her hands and wept.

Zicci rose: "I have fulfilled my duty to you, and I depart. Remember that you are still in danger from the Prince; be wary, and be cautious. Your best precaution is in flight; farewell."

"Oh, do not leave me yet; you have read a secret of which I myself was scarcely conscious; you despise me —you, my preserver! Ah, do not misjudge me; I am better, higher than I seem. Since I saw thee I have been a new being." The poor girl clasped her hands passionately as she spoke, and her tears streamed down her cheeks.

"What would you that I should answer?" said Zicci, pausing, but with a cold severity in his eye.

"Say that you do not despise—say that you do not think me light and shameless."

"Willingly, Isabel; I know your heart and your history: you are capable of great virtues; you have the seeds of a rare and powerful genius. You may pass through the brief period of your human life with a proud step and a cheerful heart, if you listen to my advice. You have been neglected from your childhood; you have been thrown among nations at once frivolous and coarse, your nobler dispositions, your higher qualities, are not developed. You were pleased with the admiration of Glyndon; you thought that the passionate stranger might marry you, while others had only uttered the vows that dishonour. Poor child, it was the instinctive desire of right within thee that made thee listen to him; and if my fatal shadow had not crossed thy path, thou

wouldst have loved him well enough, at least for content. Return to that hope, and nurse again that innocent affection; this is my answer to thee. Art thou contented?"

"No! ah, no! severe as thou art, I love better to hear thee than, than—what am I saying? And now you have saved me, I shall pray for you, bless you, think of you; and am I never to see you more? Alas, the moment you leave me, danger and dread will darken round me. Let me be your servant, your slave; with you I should have no fear."

A dark shade fell over Zicci's brow; he looked from the ground on which his eyes had rested while she spoke upon the earnest and imploring face of the beautiful creature that now knelt before him, with all the passions of an ardent and pure, but wholly untutored and half-savage nature, speaking from the tearful eyes and trembling lips. He looked at her with an aspect she could not interpret; in his eyes were kindness, sorrow, and even something, she thought, of love; yet the brow frowned, and the lip was stern.

"It is in vain that we struggle with our doom," said he, calmly; "listen to me yet. I am a man, Isabel, in whom there are some good impulses yet left, but whose life is, on the whole, devoted to a systematic and selfish desire to enjoy whatever life can afford. To me it is given to warn; the warning neglected, I interfere no more; I leave her victories to that Fate that I cannot baffle of her prey. You do not understand me; no matter: what I am now about to say will be more easy to comprehend. I tell thee to tear from thy heart all thought of me; thou hast yet the power. If thou wilt not obey me, thou must reap the seeds that thou wilt sow. Glyndon, if thou acceptest his homage, will love thee throughout life; I, too, can love thee."

"You,—you——"

"But with a lukewarm and selfish love; and one that cannot last. Thou wilt be a flower in my path:—I inhale thy sweetness, and pass on—caring not what wind shall sup thee, or what step shall tread thee to the dust. Which is the love thou wouldst prefer?"

"But do you—can you love me!—you—you, Zicci, even for an hour? say it again."

"Yes, Isabel;—I am not dead to beauty; and yours is that rarely given to the daughters of men. Yes, Isabel, I could love thee."

Isabel uttered a cry of joy, seized his hand, and kissed it through burning and impassioned tears. Zicci raised her in his arms, and imprinted one kiss upon her forehead.

"Do not deceive thyself," he said; "consider well. I tell thee again, that my love is subjected to the certain curse of change. For my part, I shall seek thee no more. Thy fate shall be thine own and not mine. For the rest, fear not the Prince di ——. At *present*, I can save thee from every harm."

With these words he withdrew himself from her embrace, and had gained the outer door just as Gionetta came from the kitchen with her hands full of such cheer as she had managed to collect together. Zicci laid his hand on the old woman's arm.

"Signor Glyndon," said he, "loves Isabel; he may wed her. You love your mistress; plead for him. Disabuse her, if you can, of any caprice for me. I am a bird ever on the wing."

He dropped a purse, heavy with gold, into Gionetta's bosom—and was gone.

CHAPTER IV.

The palace of Zicci was among the noblest in Naples. It still stands, though ruined and dismantled, in one of those antique streets, from which the old races of the Norman and the Spaniard have long since vanished.

He ascended the vast staircase, and entered the rooms reserved for his private hours. They were no wise remarkable except for their luxury and splendour, and the absence of what, men, so learned as Zicci was reputed, generally prize, viz., books. Zicci seemed to know everything that books can teach; yet, of books themselves he spoke and thought with the most profound contempt.

He threw himself on a sofa, and dismissed his attendants for the night; and here it may be observed, that Zicci had no one servant who knew anything of his origin, birth, or history. Some of his attendants he had brought with him from other cities; the rest he had engaged at Naples. He hired those, only, whom wealth can make subservient. His expenditure was most lavish; his generosity, regal; but his orders were ever given as those of a general to his army. The least disobedience, the least hesitation, and the offender was at once dismissed. He was a man who sought tools, and never made confidants.

Zicci remained for a considerable time motionless and thoughtful. The hand of the clock before him pointed to the first hour of morning. The solemn voice of the time-piece aroused him from his reverie :—

"One sand more out of the mighty hour-glass," said

he, rising; "one hour nearer to the last! I am weary of humanity. I will enter into one of the countless worlds around me." He lifted the arras that clothed the walls, and touching a strong iron door (then made visible) with a minute key which he wore in a ring, passed into an inner apartment lighted by a single lamp of extraordinary lustre. The room was small; a few phials and some dried herbs were ranged in shelves on the wall, which was hung with snow-white cloth of coarse texture. From the shelves Zicci selected one of the phials, and poured the contents into a crystal cup. The liquid was colourless, and sparkled rapidly up in bubbles of light; it almost seemed to evaporate ere it reached his lips; but when the strange beverage was quaffed, a sudden change was visible in the countenance of Zicci: his beauty became yet more dazzling, his eyes shone with intense fire, and his form seemed to grow more youthful and etherial.

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CHAPTER V.

The next day, Glyndon bent his steps towards Zicci's palace. The young man's imagination, naturally inflammable, was singularly excited by the little he had seen and heard of this strange being—a spell, he could neither master nor account for, attracted him towards the stranger. Zicci's power seemed mysterious and great—his motives kindly and benevolent, yet his manners chilling and repellant. Why at one moment reject Glyndon's acquaintance, at another save him from danger? How had Zicci thus acquired the knowledge of enemies unknown to Glyndon himself? His interest was deeply roused, his gratitude appealed to; he resolved to make another effort to conciliate Zicci.

The signor was at home, and Glyndon was admitted into a lofty saloon, where in a few moments Zicci joined him.

"I am come to thank you for your warning last night," said he; "and to entreat you to complete my obligation by informing me of the quarter to which I may look for enmity and peril."

"You are a gallant, Mr. Glyndon," said Zicci, with a smile; "and do not know so little of the south as not to be aware that gallants have always rivals."

"Are you serious?" said Glyndon, colouring.

"Most serious. You love Isabel di Pisani; you have for rival one of the most powerful and relentless of the Neapolitan princes. Your danger is indeed great."

"But, pardon me—how came it known to you?"

"I give no account of myself to mortal man," replied Zicci, haughtily; "and to me it matters not whether you regard or scorn my warning."

"Well, if I may not question you, be it so;—but at least advise me what to do."

"You will not follow my advice."

"You wrong me! why?"

"Because you are constitutionally brave; you are fond of excitement and mystery; you like to be the hero of a romance. I should advise you to leave Naples; and you will disdain to do so while Naples contains a foe to shun, or a mistress to pursue."

"You are right," said the young Englishman, with energy; "and you cannot reproach me for such a resolution."

"No, there is another course left to you; do you love Isabel di Pisani truly and fervently? if so, marry her, and take a bride to your native land."

"Nay, answered Glyndon, embarrassed; "Isabel is not of my rank; her character is strange and self-willed; her education neglected. I am enslaved by her beauty, but I cannot wed her."

Zicci frowned.

"Your love then is but selfish lust, and by that love you will be betrayed. Young man, Destiny is less inexorable than it appears. The resources of the great Ruler of the Universe are not so scanty and so stern as to deny to men the divine privilege of Free Will; all of us can carve out our own way, and God can make our very contradictions harmonise with His solemn ends. You have before you an option. Honourable and generous love may even now work out your happiness, and effect your escape; a frantic and interested passion will but lead you to misery and doom."

"Do you pretend, then, to read the Future?"

"I have said all that it pleases me to utter."

"While you assume the moralist to me, Signor Zicci," said Glyndon, with a smile, "if report says true, you do not yourself reject the allurements of unfettered love."

"If it were necessary that practice square with precept," said Zicci, with a sneer, "our pulpits would be empty. Do you think it matters, in the great aggregate of human destinies, what one man's *conduct* may be? Nothing; not a grain of dust: but it matters much what are the *sentiments* he propagates. His acts are limited and momentary; his sentiments may pervade the universe, and inspire generations till the day of doom. All our virtues, all our laws, are drawn from books and maxims, which *are* sentiments, not from deeds. Our opinions, young Englishman, are the angel part of us; our acts the earthly."

"You have reflected deeply for an Italian," said Glyndon.

"Who told you I was an Italian?"

"Are you not of Corsica?"

"Tush," said Zicci, impatiently turning away. Then, after a pause, he resumed, in a mild voice—"Glyndon, do you renounce Isabel di Pisani? Will you take three days to consider of what I have said?"

"Renounce her—never!"

"Then you will marry her?"

"Impossible."

"Be it so: she will then renounce you.—I tell you that you have rivals."

"Yes; the Prince di ——; but I do not fear him."

"You have another, whom you will fear more."

"And who is he?"

"Myself."

Glyndon turned pale and started from his seat.

"You, Signor Zicci!—you—and you dare to tell me so?"

"Dare! Alas! you know there is nothing on earth left me to fear!"

These words were not uttered arrogantly, but in a tone of the most mournful dejection. Glyndon was enraged, confounded, and yet awed. However, he had a brave English heart within his breast, and he recovered himself quickly.

"Signor," said he, calmly, "I am not to be duped by these solemn phrases, and these mystical sympathies. You may have power which I cannot comprehend or emulate, or you may be but a keen impostor."

"Well, sir, your logical position is not ill-taken—proceed."

"I mean then," continued Glyndon, resolutely, though somewhat disconcerted, "I mean you to understand, that, though I am not to be persuaded or compelled by a stranger to marry Isabel di Pisani, I am not the less determined never tamely to yield her to another."

Zicci looked gravely at the young man, whose sparkling eyes and heightened colour testified the spirit to support his words, and replied—"So bold! well; it becomes you. You have courage, then—I thought it. Perhaps it may be put to a sharper test than you dream of. But take my advice: wait three days, and tell me then if you will marry this young person."

"But if you love her, why—why——"

"Why am I anxious that she should wed another:—to save her from myself! Listen to me. That girl, humble and uneducated though she be, has in her the seeds of the most lofty qualities and virtues. She can be all to the man she loves—all that man can desire in wife or mistress. Her soul, developed by affection, will elevate your own: it will influence your fortunes, exalt your destiny: you will become a great and prosperous man. If, on the contrary, she fall to me, I know not what may be her lot; but I know that few can pass

the ordeal, and hitherto no woman has survived the struggle."

As Zicci spoke his face became livid, and there was something in his voice that froze the warm blood of his listener.

"What is this mystery which surrounds you?" exclaimed Glyndon, unable to repress his emotion. "Are you, in truth, different from other men? Have you passed the boundary of lawful knowledge? Are you, as some declare, a sorcerer, only a——"

"Hush!" interrupted Zicci, gently, and with a smile of singular but melancholy sweetness: "have you earned the right to ask me these questions? The days of torture and persecution are over; and a man may live as he pleases, and talk as it suits him, without fear of the stake and the rack. Since I can defy persecution, pardon me if I do not succumb to curiosity."

Glyndon blushed, and rose. In spite of his love for Isabel, and his natural terror of such a rival, he felt himself irresistibly drawn towards the very man he had most cause to suspect and dread. It was like the fascination of the basilisk. He held out his hand to Zicci, saying, "Well, then, if we are to be rivals, our swords must settle our rights: till then I would fain be friends."

"Friends! Pardon me: I like you too well to give you my friendship. You know not what you ask."

"Enigmas again!"

"Enigmas!" cried Zicci, passionately, "ay: can you dare to solve them? Would you brave all that human heart can conceive of peril and of horror, so that you at last might stand separated from this visible universe side by side with me? When you can dare this, and when you are fit to dare it, I may give you my right hand, and call you friend."

"I could dare every thing and all things for the

attainment of superhuman wisdom," said Glyndon; and his countenance was lighted up with wild and intense enthusiasm.

Zicci observed him in thoughtful silence.

"He may be worthy," he muttered; "he may,—yet——" He broke off abruptly; then, speaking aloud —"Go, Glyndon," said he: "in three days we shall meet again."

"Where?"

"Perhaps where you can least anticipate. In any case, we shall meet."

CHAPTER VI.

Glyndon thought seriously and deeply over all that the mysterious Zicci had said to him relative to Isabel. His imagination was inflamed by the vague and splendid promises that were connected with his marriage with the poor actress. His fears, too, were naturally aroused by the threat that by marriage alone could he save himself from the rivalry of Zicci—Zicci—born to dazzle and command—Zicci, who united to the apparent wealth of a monarch the beauty of a god—Zicci, whose eye seemed to foresee, whose hand to frustrate, every danger. What a rival! and what a foe!

But Glyndon's pride, as well as jealousy, was aroused. He was *brave comme son epée.* Should he shrink from the power or the enmity of a man mortal as himself? And why should Zicci desire him to give his name and station to one of a calling so equivocal? Might there not be motives he could not fathom? Might not the actress and the Corsican be in league with each other? Might not all this jargon of prophecy and menace be but artifices to dupe him?—the tool, perhaps, of a mountebank and his mistress! Mistress! ah no. If ever maidenhood wrote its modest characters externally —that pure eye—that noble forehead—that mien and manner, so ingenuous even in their coquetry, their pride —assured him that Isabel was not the base and guilty thing he had dared for a moment to suspect her. Lost in a labyrinth of doubts and surmises, Glyndon turned on the practical sense of the sober Merton to assist and enlighten him.

As may be well supposed, his friend listened to his account of his interview with Zieci with a half-suppressed and ironieal smile.

"Excellent, my dear friend. This Zieci is another Apollonius of Tyana — nothing less will satisfy you. What! is it possible that you are the Clarence Glyndon of whose career such glowing hopes are entertained? You the man whose genius has been extolled by all the greybeards? Not a boy turned out from a village school but would laugh you to scorn. And so because Signor Zieei tells you that you will be a marvellously great man if you revolt all your friends, and blight all your prospects, by marrying a Neapolitan actress, you begin already to think of—By Jupiter! I cannot talk patiently on the subject. Let the girl alone; that would be the proper plan; or else——"

"You talk very sensibly," interrupted Glyndon, "but you distract me. I will go to Isabel's house—I will see her—I will judge for myself."

"That is certainly the best way to forget her," said Merton.

Glyndon seized his hat and sword, and was gone.

CHAPTER VII.

She was seated outside her door—the young actress. The sea, which in that heavenly bay literally seems to sleep in the arms of the shore, bounded the view in front; while to the right, not far off, rose the dark and tangled crags to which the traveller of to-day is daily brought to gaze on the tomb of Virgil, or compare with the Cavern of Pausilippo the archway of Highgate-hill. There were a few fishermen loitering by the cliffs, on which their nets were hung up to dry; and, at a distance, the sound of some rustic pipe (more common at that day than in this), mingled now and then with the bells of the lazy mules, broke the voluptuous silence—the silence of declining noon on the shores of Naples. Never till you have enjoyed it, never till you have felt its enervating but delicious charm, believe that you can comprehend all the meaning of the *dolce far niente*;—and when that luxury has been known, when you have breathed the atmosphere of faëry land, then you will no longer wonder why the heart ripens with so sudden and wild a power beneath the rosy skies and amidst the glorious foliage of the south.

The young actress was seated by the door of her house; overhead a rude canvas awning sheltered her from the sun; on her lap lay the manuscript of a new part in which she was shortly to appear. By her side was the guitar on which she had been practising the airs that were to ravish the ears of the cognoscenti. But the guitar had been thrown aside in despair—her voice this morning did not obey her will. The manu-

script lay unheeded, and the eyes of the actress were fixed on the broad, blue deep beyond. In the unwonted negligence of her dress might be traced the abstraction of her mind. Her beautiful hair was gathered up loosely, and partially bandaged by a kerchief, whose purple colour seemed to deepen the golden hue of the tresses. A stray curl escaped, and fell down the graceful neck. A loose morning-robe, girded by a sash, left the breeze that came ever and anon from the sea to die upon the bust half disclosed, and the tiny slipper, that Cinderella might have worn, seemed a world too wide for the tiny foot which it scarcely covered. It might be the heat of the day that deepened the soft bloom of the cheeks, and gave an unwonted languor to the large dark eyes. In all the pomp of her stage attire —in all the flush of excitement before the intoxicating lamps—never had Isabel looked so lovely.

By the side of the actress, and filling up the threshold, stood Gianetta, with her hands thrust up to the elbow in two huge recesses on either side her gown—pockets, indeed, they might be called by courtesy—such pockets as Beelzebub's grandmother might have shaped for herself, bottomless pits in miniature.

"But I assure you," said the nurse, in that sharp, quick, ear-splitting tone in which the old women of the south are more than a match for those of the north, "but I assure you, my darling, that there is not a finer cavalier in all Naples, nor a more beautiful, than this *Inglese*— and I am told that all the *Inglesi* are much richer than they seem. Though they have no trees in their country, poor people, and instead of twenty-four they have only twelve hours to the day, yet I hear, *cospetto!* that they shoe their horses with *scudi;* and since they cannot (the poor heretics!) turn grapes into wine, for they have no grapes, they turn gold into physic, and take a glass or two of *pistoles* whenever they are troubled with the

cholic. But you don't hear me. Little pupil of my eyes, you don't hear me!"

"Gionetta, is he not god-like?"

"*Sancta Maria!* he is handsome, *bellissimo;* and when you are his wife—for they say these English are never satisfied unless they marry——"

"Wife!—English!—whom are you talking of?"

"Why, the young English signor, to be sure."

"Chut! I thought you spoke of Zicci."

"O! Signor Zicci is very rich and very generous; but he wants to be your cavalier, not your husband. I see that—leave me alone. When you are married, then you will see how amiable Signor Zicci will be. Oh, *per fede*, but he will be as close to your husband as the yolk to the white—that he will."

"Silence, Gionetta! How wretched I am to have no one else to speak to—to advise me. Oh, beautiful sun!" and the girl pressed her hand to her heart with wild energy, "why do you light every spot but *this?* Dark—dark. And a little while ago I was so calm, so innocent, so gay. I did not hate you, then, Gionetta, hateful as your talk was—I hate you now. Go in—leave me alone—leave me."

"And indeed it is time I should leave you, for the *polenta* will be spoiled, and you have eat nothing all day. If you don't eat you will lose your beauty, my darling, and then nobody will care for you. Nobody cares for us when we grow ugly—I know that—and then you must, like old Gionetta, get some Isabel of your own to spoil. I'll go and see to the *polenta*."

"Since I have known this man," said the actress, half aloud, "since his dark eyes have fascinated me, I am no longer the same. I long to escape from myself—to glide with the sunbeam over the hill-tops—to become something that is not of earth. Is it, indeed, that he is a sorcerer, as I have heard? Phantoms float before

me at night, and a fluttering like the wing of a bird within my heart, seems as if the spirit were terrified, and would break its cage."

While murmuring these incoherent rhapsodies, a step that she did not hear approached the actress, and a light hand touched her arm.

"Isabella! *carissima!* Isabella!"

She turned and saw Glyndon. The sight of his fair young face calmed her at once. She did not love him, yet his sight gave her pleasure. She had for him a kind and grateful feeling. Ah, if she had never beheld Zicci!

"Isabel," said the Englishman, drawing her again to the bench from which she had risen, and seating himself beside her. "You know how passionately I love thee. Hitherto thou hast played with my impatience and my ardour; thou hast sometimes smiled, sometimes frowned away my importunities for a reply to my suit; but this day—I know not how it is—I feel a more sustained and settled courage to address thee, and learn the happiest or the worst. I have rivals, I know, rivals who are more powerful than the poor artist. Are they also more favoured?"

Isabel blushed faintly, but her countenance was grave and distressed. Looking down, and marking some hieroglyphical figures in the dust with the point of her slipper, she said, with some hesitation and a vain attempt to be gay, "Signor, whoever wastes his thoughts on an actress must submit to have rivals. It is our unhappy destiny not to be sacred even to ourselves."

"But you have told me, Isabel, that you do not love this destiny, glittering though it seem—that your heart is not in the vocation which your talents adorn."

"Ah no," said the actress, her eyes filling with tears, "it is a miserable lot to be slave to a multitude."

"Fly then with me," said the artist passionately.

"Quit for ever the calling that divides that heart I would have all my own. Share my fate now and for ever—my pride, my delight, my ideal! Thou shalt inspire my canvas and my song, thy beauty shall be made at once holy and renowned. In the galleries of princes crowds shall gather round the effigy of a Venus or a saint, and a whisper shall break forth, 'It is Isabel di Pisani!' Ah! Isabel, I adore thee; tell me that I do not worship in vain."

"Thou art good and fair," said Isabel, gazing on her lover as he pressed his cheek nearer to hers, and clasped her hand in his. "But what should I give thee in return?"

"Love—love—only love!"

"A sister's love?"

"Ah, speak not with such cruel coldness!"

"It is all I have for thee. Listen to me, signor: When I look on your face, when I hear your voice, a certain serene and tranquil calm creeps over and lulls thoughts—oh, how feverish, how wild! When thou art gone the day seems a shade more dark; but the shadow soon flies. I miss thee not; I think not of thee; no, I love thee not; and I will give myself only where I love."

"But I would teach thee to love me—fear it not. Nay, such love as thou now describest in our tranquil climates is the love of innocence and youth."

"And it is the innocence he would destroy," said Isabel, rather to herself than to him.

Glyndon drew back conscience-stricken.

"No, it may not be!" she said, rising, and extricating her hand gently from his grasp. "Leave me, and forget me. You do not understand, you could not comprehend, the nature of her whom you think to love. From my childhood upward, I have felt as if I were marked out for some strange and preternatural doom; as if I were

singled from my kind: this feeling (and oh! at times it is one of delirious and vague delight, at others of the darkest gloom) deepens with me day by day. It is like the shadow of twilight, spreading slowly and solemnly round. My hour approaches: a little while and it will be night!"

As she spoke, Glyndon listened with visible emotion and perturbation. "Isabel!" he exclaimed, as she ceased, "your words more than ever enchain me to you. As you feel, I feel. I, too, have been ever haunted with a chill and unearthly foreboding. Amidst the crowds of men I have felt alone. In all my pleasures, my toils, my pursuits, a warning voice has murmured in my ear, 'Time has a dark mystery in store for thy manhood.' When you spoke it was as the voice of my own soul."

Isabel gazed upon him in wonder and fear. Her countenance was as white as marble: and those features, so divine in their rare symmetry, might have served the Greek with a study for the Pythoness, when, from the mystic cavern and the bubbling spring, she first hears the voice of the inspiring God. Gradually the rigour and tension of that wonderful face relaxed—the colour returned, the pulse beat, the heart animated the frame.

"Tell me," she said, turning partially aside, "tell me, have you seen, do you know, a stranger in this city? one of whom wild stories are afloat."

"You speak of Zicci: I have seen him! I know him? and you? Ah! he, too, would be my rival?—he, too, would bear thee from me!"

"You err," said Isabel, hastily, and with a deep sigh; "he pleads for you: he informed me of your love; he besought me not—not to reject it."

"Strange being! incomprehensible enigma! why did you name him?"

"Why? ah! I would have asked, whether, when

you first saw him, the foreboding, the instinct, of which you spoke came on you more fearfully, more intelligibly than before—whether you felt at once repelled from him, yet attracted towards him—whether you felt (and the actress spoke with hurried animation) that with HIM was connected the secret of your life!"

"All this I felt," answered Glyndon, in a trembling voice, "the first time I was in his presence; though all around me was gay;—music, amidst lamp-lit trees, light converse near, and Heaven without a cloud above, my knees knocked together, my hair bristled, and my blood curdled like ice; since then he has divided my thoughts with thee."

"No more, no more," said Isabel, in a stifled tone; "there must be the hand of fate in this; I can speak no more to you now; farewell."

She sprang past him into the house, and closed the door. Glyndon did not dare to follow her, nor, strange as it may seem, was he so inclined. The thought and recollection of that moonlight hour in the gardens,—of the strange address of Zicci, froze up all human passion; Isabel, herself, if not forgotten, shrunk back like a shadow into the recesses of his breast. He shivered as he stepped into the sunlight and musingly retraced his steps into the more populous parts of that liveliest of Italian cities.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was a small cabinet;—the walls were covered with pictures, one of which was worth more than the whole lineage of the owner of the palace. Is not Art a wonderful thing?—a Venetian noble might be a fribble, or an assassin—a scoundrel, or a dolt; worthless, or worse than worthless; yet he might have sate to Titian, and his portrait may be inestimable!—a few inches of painted canvas a thousand times more valuable than a man with his veins and muscles, brain, will, heart, and intellect.

In this cabinet sate a man of about three and forty,—dark-eyed, sallow, with short, prominent features, a massive conformation of jaw, and thick, sensual, but resolute lips;—this man was the Prince di ——. His form, middle-sized, but rather inclined to corpulence, was clothed in a loose dressing-robe of rich brocade; on a table before him lay his sword and hat, a mask, dice and dice-box, a portfolio, and an inkstand of silver curiously carved.

"Well, Mascari," said the prince, looking up towards his parasite, who stood by the embrasure of the deep-set barricaded window, "well, you cannot even guess who this insolent meddler was. A pretty person you to act the part of a Prince's Ruffiano."

"Am I to be blamed for dulness in not being able to conjecture who had the courage to thwart the projects of the Prince di——. As well blame me for not accounting for miracles."

"I will tell thee who it was, most sapient Mascari."

"Who, your Excellency?"

"Zicci."

"Ah! he has the daring of the devil. But why does your Excellency feel so assured; does he court the actress?"

"I know not: but there is a tone in that foreigner's voice that I never can mistake—so clear, and yet so hollow: when I hear it I almost fancy there is such a thing as conscience. However, we must rid ourselves of an impertinent. Mascari, Signor Zicci hath not yet honoured our poor house with his presence. He is a distinguished stranger—we must give a banquet in his honour."

"Ah!—and the cypress wine! The cypress is the proper emblem of the grave."

"But this anon. I am superstitious: there are strange stories of his power and foresight:—remember the Sicilian quackery! But meanwhile the Pisani ——."

"Your Excellency is infatuated. The actress has bewitched you."

"Mascari," said the Prince, with a haughty smile, "through these veins rolls the blood of the old Visconti —of those who boasted that no woman ever escaped their lust, and no man their resentment. The crown of my fathers has shrunk into a gewgaw and a toy; —their ambition and their spirit are undecayed. My honour is now enlisted in this pursuit—Isabel must be mine."

"Another ambuscade?" said Mascari, inquiringly.

"Nay, why not enter the house itself: the situation is lonely—and the door is not made of iron."

Before Mascari could reply, the gentleman of the chamber announced the Signor Zicci.

The Prince involuntarily laid his hand on the sword placed on the table—then with a smile at his own impulse, rose; and met the foreigner at the threshold, with

all the profuse and respectful courtesy of Italian simulation.

"This is an honour highly prized," said the Prince; "I have long desired the friendship of one so distinguished ——"

"And I have come to give you that friendship," replied Zicci, in a sweet but chilling voice. "To no man yet in Naples have I extended this hand—permit it, Prince, to grasp your own."

The Neapolitan bowed over the hand he pressed; but as he touched it, a shiver came over him, and his heart stood still. Zicci bent on him his dark, smiling eyes, and then seated himself with a familiar air.

"Thus it is signed and sealed—I mean our friendship, noble Prince. And now I will tell you the object of my visit. I find, your Excellency, that, unconsciously perhaps, we are rivals. Can we not accommodate our pretensions? A girl of no moment—an actress;—bah! it is not worth a quarrel. Shall we throw for her? He who casts the lowest shall resign his claim?"

Maseari opened his small eyes to their widest extent; the Prince, no less surprised, but far too well world-read even to show what he felt, laughed aloud.

"And were you, then, the cavalier who spoiled my night's chase, and robbed me of my white doe? By Bacchus, it was prettily done."

"You must forgive me, my Prince; I knew not who it was, or my respect would have silenced my gallantry."

"All stratagems fair in love, as in war. Of course you profited by my defeat, and did not content yourself with leaving the little actress at her threshold?"

"She is Diana for me," answered Zicci, lightly; "whoever wins the wreath will not find a flower faded."

"And now you would cast for her—well: but they tell me you are ever a sure player."

"Let Signor Mascari cast for us."

"Be it so. Mascari, the dice."

Surprised and perplexed, the parasite took up the three dice, deposited them gravely in the box, and rattled them noisily, while Zicci threw himself back carelessly in his chair, and said, "I give the first chance to your Excellency."

Mascari interchanged a glance with his patron, and threw; the numbers were sixteen.

"It is a high throw," said Zicci, calmly; "nevertheless, Signor Mascari, I do not despond."

Mascari gathered up the dice, shook the box, and rolled the contents once more upon the table; the number was the highest that can be thrown—eighteen.

The Prince darted a glance of fire at his minion, who stood with gaping mouth, staring at the dice, and shaking his head in puzzled wonder.

"I have won, you see," said Zicci; "may we be friends still?"

"Signor," said the Prince, obviously struggling with anger and confusion, "the victory is already yours. But, pardon me, you have spoken lightly of this young girl—will anything tempt you to yield your claim?"

"Ah, do not think so ill of my gallantry."

"Enough," said the Prince, forcing a smile; "I yield. Let me prove that I do not yield ungraciously; will you honour me with your presence at a little feast I propose to give on the Royal birth-day?"

"It is indeed a happiness to hear one command of yours which I can obey."

Zicci then turned the conversation, talked lightly and gaily; and soon afterwards departed.

"Villain," then exclaimed the Prince, grasping Mascari by the collar, "you have betrayed me."

"I assure your Excellency that the dice were properly

arranged: he should have thrown twelve: but he is the Devil, and that's the end of it."

"There is no time to be lost," said the Prince, quitting hold of his parasite, who quietly resettled his cravat.

"My blood is up—I will win this girl, if I die for it. Who laughed? Mascari, didst *thou* laugh?"

"I, your Excelleney—I laugh?"

"It sounded behind me," said the Prince, gazing round.

CHAPTER IX.

It was the day on which Zicci had told Glyndon that he should ask for his decision in respect to Isabel—the third day since their last meeting;—the Englishman could not come to a resolution. Ambition, hitherto the leading passion of his soul, could not yet be silenced by love; and that love, such as it was, unreturned, beset by suspicions and doubts which vanished in the presence of Isabel, and returned when her bright face shone on his eyes no more, for—*les absens ont toujours tort!* Perhaps had he been quite alone, his feelings of honour, of compassion, of virtue, might have triumphed; and he would have resolved either to fly from Isabel, or to offer the love that has no shame. But Merton, cold, cautious, experienced, wary (such a nature has ever power over the imaginate and the impassioned), was at hand to ridicule the impression produced by Zicci, and the notion of delicacy and honour towards an Italian actress. It is true that Merton, who was no profligate, advised him to quit all pursuit of Isabel; but then the advice was precisely of that character which, if it deadens love, stimulates passion. By representing Isabel as one who sought to play a part with him, he excused to Glyndon his own selfishness—he enlisted the Englishman's vanity and pride on the side of his pursuit. Why should he not beat an adventuress at her own weapons?

Glyndon not only felt indisposed on that day to meet Zicci, but he felt also a strong desire to defeat the mysterious prophecy that the meeting should take

place. Into this wish Merton readily entered. The young men agreed to be absent from Naples that day. Early in the morning they mounted their horses, and took the road to Baiæ. Glyndon left word at his hotel, that if Signor Zicci sought him, it was in the neighbourhood of the once celebrated watering-place of the ancients that he should be found.

They passed by Isabel's house, but Glyndon resisted the temptation of pausing there, and threading the grotto of Pausilippo they wound by a circuitous route back into the suburbs of the city, and took the opposite road which conducts to Portici and Pompeii. It was late at noon when they arrived at the former of these places. Here they halted to dine; for Merton had heard much of the excellence of the macaroni at Portici, and Merton was a *bon vivant*.

They put up at an inn of very humble pretensions, and dined under an awning. Merton was more than usually gay; he pressed the Lacryma upon his friend, and conversed gaily.

"Well, my dear friend, we have foiled Signor Zicci in one of his predictions at least. You will have no faith in him hereafter."

"The Ides are come, not gone."

"Tush! if he is a soothsayer, you are not Cæsar. It is your vanity that makes you credulous: thank heaven, I do not think myself of such importance, that the operations of nature should be changed in order to frighten me."

"But why should the operations of nature be changed: there may be a deeper philosophy than we dream of—a philosophy that discovers the secrets of nature, but does not alter, by penetrating, its courses."

"Ah! you suppose Zicci to be a prophet—a reader of the future; perhaps an associate of Genii and Spirits!"

"I know not what to conjecture; but I see no

reason why he should seek, even if an impostor, to impose on me. An impostor must have some motive for deluding us—either ambition or avarice. I am neither rich nor powerful; Zicci spends more in a week than I do in a year. Nay, a Neapolitan banker told me, that the sums invested by Zicci in his hands, were enough to purchase half the lands of the Neapolitan noblesse."

"Grant this to be true; do you suppose the love to dazzle and mystify is not as strong with some natures as that of gold and power with others? Zicci has a moral ostentation, and the same character that makes him rival kings in expenditure makes him not disdain to be wondered at even by a humble Englishman."

Here the landlord, a little fat oily fellow, came up with a fresh bottle of Lacryma. He hoped their Excellencies were pleased. He was most touched—touched to the heart that they liked the macaroni. Were their Excellencies going to Vesuvius; there was a slight eruption; they could not see it where they were, but it was pretty, and would be prettier still after sunset.

"A capital idea," cried Merton. "What say you, Glyndon?"

"I have not yet seen an eruption; I should like it much."

"But is there no danger?" said the prudent Merton.

"Oh, not at all; the mountain is very civil at present. It only plays a little, just to amuse their Excellencies the English."

"Well, order the horses, and bring the bill; we will go before it is dark. Clarence, my friend—*Nunc est libendum;* but take care of the *pede libero*, which won't do for walking on lava!"

The bottle was finished, the bill paid, the gentlemen mounted, the landlord bowed, and they bent their way in the cool of the delightful evening towards Resina.

The wine animated Glyndon, whose unequal spirits were, at times, high and brilliant as those of a school-boy released; and the laughter of the northern tourists sounded oft and merrily along the melancholy domains of buried cities.

Hesperus had lighted his lamp amidst the rosy skies as they arrived at Resina. Here they quitted their horses, and took mules and a guide. As the sky grew darker and more dark, the Mountain Fire burned with an intense lustre. In various streaks and streamlets, the fountain of flame rolled down the dark summit, then undiminished by the eruption of 1822, and the Englishmen began to feel increase upon them as they ascended, that sensation of solemnity and awe which makes the very atmosphere that surrounds the giant of the Plains of the Antique Hades.

It was night, when, leaving the mules, they ascended on foot, accompanied by their guide and a peasant, who bore a rude torch. The guide was a conversable, garrulous fellow, like most of his country and his calling; and Merton, whose chief characteristics were a sociable temper and a hardy common sense, loved to amuse or to instruct himself on every incidental occasion.

"Ah! Excellency," said the guide, "your countrymen have a strong passion for the volcano. Long life to them; they bring us plenty of money. If our fortunes depended on the Neapolitans, we should starve."

"True, they have no curiosity," said Merton. "Do you remember, Glyndon, the contempt with which that old Count said to us, 'You will go to Vesuvius, I suppose; I have never been: why should I go? You have cold, you have hunger, you have fatigue, you have danger, and all for nothing but to see fire, which just looks as well in a brazier as a mountain.' Ha! ha! the old fellow was right."

"But, Excellency," said the guide, "that is not all: some cavaliers think to ascend the mountain without our help. I am sure they deserve to tumble into the crater."

"They must be bold fellows to go alone; you don't often find such."

"Sometimes among the French, signor. But the other night—I never was so frightened. I had been with an English party; and a lady had left a pocket-book on the mountain, where she had been sketching. She offered me a handsome sum to return for it, and bring it to her at Naples. So I went in the evening,—I found it sure enough, and was about to return, when I saw a figure that seemed to emerge from the crater itself. The air was so pestiferous, that I could not have conceived a human creature could breathe it and live. I was so astounded that I stood as still as a stone, till the figure came over the hot ashes, and stood before me face to face. Santa Maria, what a head!"

"What, hideous!"

"No, so beautiful, but so terrible. It had nothing human in its aspect."

"And what said the Salamander?

„Nothing! It did not even seem to perceive me, though I was as near as I am to you; but its eyes seemed prying into the air. It passed by me quickly, and, walking across a stream of burning lava, soon vanished on the other side of the mountain. I was curious and foolhardy, and resolved to see if I could bear the atmosphere which this visitor had left; but, though I did not advance within thirty yards of the spot at which he had first appeared, I was driven back by a vapour that well-nigh stifled me. *Cospetto*, I have spat blood ever since."

"It must be Zicci," whispered Glyndon.

"I knew you would say so," returned Merton, laughing.

The little party had now arrived nearly at the summit of the mountain; and unspeakably grand was the spectacle on which they gazed. From the crater arose a vapour, intensely dark, that overspread the whole background of the heavens; in the centre whereof rose a flame, that assumed a form singularly beautiful. It might have been compared to a crest of gigantic feathers, the diadem of the mountain, high arched, and drooping downward, with the hues delicately shaded off, and the whole shifting and tremulous as the plumage on a warrior's helm. The glare of the flame spread, luminous and crimson, over the dark and rugged ground on which they stood, and drew an innumerable variety of shadows from crag and hollow. An oppressive and sulphureous exhalation served to increase the gloomy and sublime terror of the place; but on turning from the mountain, and towards the distant and unseen ocean, the contrast was wonderfully great; the heavens serene and blue, the stars still and calm as the eyes of Divine Love. It was as if the realms of the opposing principles of Evil and Good were brought in one view before the gaze of man! Glyndon—the enthusiast, the poet, the artist, the dreamer—was enchained and entranced by emotions vague and undefinable, half of delight and half of pain. Leaning on the shoulder of his friend, he gazed around him, and heard, with deepening awe, the rumbling of the earth below, the wheels and voices of the Ministry of Nature in her darkest and most inscrutable recess. Suddenly, as a bomb from a shell, a huge stone was flung hundreds of yards up from the jaws of the crater, and falling with a mighty crash upon the rock below, split into ten thousand fragments, which bounded down the sides of the mountain, sparkling and groaning as they went. One of these, the largest fragment, struck the narrow space of soil between the Englishman and the guide, not three feet from the spot where the former

stood. Merton uttered an exclamation of terror, and Glyndon held his breath and shuddered.

"Diavolo," cried the guide. "Descend, excellencies, descend; we have not a moment to lose; follow me close."

So saying, the guide and the peasant fled with as much swiftness as they were able to bring to bear. Merton, ever more prompt and ready than his friend, imitated their example; and Glyndon, more confused than alarmed, followed close. But they had not gone many yards, before, with a rushing and sudden blast, came from the crater an enormous volume of vapour. It pursued—it overtook—it overspread them. It swept the light from the heavens. All was abrupt and utter darkness, and through the gloom was heard the shout of the guide, already distant, and lost in an instant amidst the sound of the rushing gust, and the groans of the earth beneath. Glyndon paused. He was separated from his friend—from the guide. He was alone—with the Darkness and the Terror. The vapour rolled sullenly away; the form of the plumed fire was again dimly visible, and its struggling and perturbed reflection again shed a glow over the horrors of the path. Glyndon recovered himself, and sped onward. Below, he heard the voice of Merton calling on him, though he no longer saw his form. The sound served as a guide. Dizzy and breathless, he bounded forward; when—hark! a sullen, slow, rolling sound in his ear! He halted—and turned back to gaze. The fire had overflowed its course; it had opened itself a channel amidst the furrows of the mountain. The stream pursued him—fast—fast; and the hot breath of the chasing and preternatural foe came closer and closer upon his cheek. He turned aside: he climbed desperately, with hands and feet, upon a crag, that, to the right, broke the scathed and blasted level of the soil. The stream rolled

beside and beneath him, and then, taking a sudden wind round the spot on which he stood, interposed its liquid fire, a broad and impassable barrier, between his resting-place and escape. There he stood, cut off from descent, and with no alternative but to retrace his steps towards the crater, and thence seek—without guide or clue—some other pathway.

For a moment his courage left him; he cried in despair, and in that overstrained pitch of voice which is never heard afar off, to the guide—to Merton—to return—to aid him.

No answer came—and the Englishman, thus abandoned solely to his own resources, felt his spirit and energy rise against the danger. He turned back, and ventured as far towards the crater as the noxious exhalation would permit; then, gazing below, carefully and deliberately, he chalked out for himself a path, by which he trusted to shun the direction the fire-stream had taken,—and trod firmly and quickly over the crumbling and heated strata.

He had proceeded about fifty yards, when he halted abruptly; an unspeakable and unaccountable horror, not hitherto felt amidst all his peril, came over him. He shook in every limb; his muscles refused his will; he felt, as it were, palsied and death-stricken. The horror, I say, was unaccountable, for the path seemed clear and safe. The fire, above and behind, burnt out clear and far; and beyond, the stars lent him their cheering guidance. No obstacle was visible—no danger seemed at hand. As thus, spell-bound and panic-stricken, he stood chained to the soil—his breast heaving; large drops rolling down his brow; and his eyes starting wildly from their sockets—he saw before him, at some distance, gradually shaping itself more and more distinctly to his gaze, a Colossal Shadow—a shadow that seemed partially borrowed from the human

shape, but immeasurably above the human stature; vague, dark, almost formless; and differing—he could not tell where, or why—not only from the proportions, but also from the limbs and outline of man.

The glare of the volcano, that seemed to shrink and collapse from this gigantic and appalling apparition, nevertheless threw its light, redly and steadily, upon another shape that stood beside, quiet, and motionless; and it was, perhaps, the contrast of these two things—the Being and the Shadow—that impressed the beholder with the difference between them—the Man and the Superhuman. It was but for a moment, nay, for the tenth part of a moment, that this sight was permitted to the wanderer. A second eddy of sulphureous vapours from the volcano, yet more rapidly, yet more densely than its predecessor, rolled over the mountain; and either the nature of the exhalation, or the excess of his own dread, was such, that Glyndon, after one wild gasp for breath, fell senseless on the earth.

CHAPTER X.

Merton and the Italians arrived in safety at the spot where they had left the mules; and not till they had recovered their own alarm and breath did they think of Glyndon. But then, as the minutes passed, and he appeared not, Merton—whose heart was as good, at least, as human hearts are in general—grew seriously alarmed. He insisted on returning to search for his friend; and by dint of prodigal promises, prevailed at last on the guide to accompany him. The lower part of the mountain lay calm and white in the starlight; and the guide's practised eye could discern all objects on the surface, at a considerable distance. They had not, however, gone very far, before they perceived two forms, slowly approaching towards them.

As they came near, Merton recognised the form of his friend. "Thank Heaven, he is safe," he cried, turning to the guide.

"Holy angels befriend us," said the Italian, trembling. "Behold the very being that crossed me last Sabbath night. It is he!—but his face is human now!"

"Signor Inglese," said the voice of Zicci, as Glyndon, pale, wan, and silent—returned passively the joyous greeting of Merton. "Signor Inglese, I told your friend we should meet to-night; you see, you have not foiled my prediction."

"But how—but where?" stammered Merton, in great confusion and surprise.

"I found your friend stretched on the ground, over-

powered by the mephitic exhalation of the crater. I bore him to a purer atmosphere; and, as I know the mountain well, I have conducted him safely to you. This is all our history. You see, sir, that were it not for that prophecy which you desired to frustrate, your friend would, ere this time, have been a corpse; one minute more, and the vapour had done its work. Adieu; good night, and pleasant dreams."

"But, my preserver, you will not leave us," said Glyndon, anxiously, and speaking for the first time. "Will you not return with us?"

Zicci paused, and drew Glyndon aside. "Young man," said he, gravely, "it is neeessary that we should again meet to-night. It is neccssary that you should, ere the first hour of morning, decide on your fate. Will you marry Isabel di Pisani—or lose her for ever? Consult not your friend; he is sensible and wise, but not now is his wisdom needed. There are times in life when, from the imagination, and not the reason, should wisdom come—this for you is one of them. I ask not your answer now. Collect your thoughts—recover your jaded and scattered spirits. It wants two hours of midnight—at midnight I will be with you!"

"Incomprehensible being," replied the Englishman, "I would leave the life you have preserved in your own hands. But since I have known you my whole nature has changed. A fiercer desire than that of love burns in my veins—the desire not to resemble, but to surpass my kind—the desire to penetrate and to share the secret of your own existence—the desire of a preternatural knowledge and unearthly power. Instruct me—school me—make me thine; and I surrender to thee at once, and without a murmur, the woman, that till I saw thee, I would have defied a world to obtain."

"I ask not the sacrifice, Glyndon," replied Zicci coldly, yet mildly:—"yet, shall I own it to thee!—I am

touched by the devotion I have inspired. I sicken for *human* companionship, sympathy, and friendship; yet, I dread to share them,—for bold must be the man who can partake my existence, and enjoy my confidence. Once more I say to thee, in compassion and in warning, the choice of life is in thy hands—to-morrow it will be too late. On the other hand, Isabel, a tranquil home, a happy and serene life:—on the one hand, all is darkness—darkness, that even this eye cannot penetrate."

"But thou hast told me, that if I wed Isabel, I must be contented to be obscure; and if I refuse, that knowledge and power may be mine."

"Vain man! knowledge and power are not happiness."

"But they are better than happiness. Say—if I marry Isabel, wilt thou be my master—my guide?—say this—and I am resolved."

"Never! It is only the lonely at heart—the restless—the desperate—that may be my pupils."

"Then I renounce her!—I renounce love—I renounce happiness. Welcome solitude—welcome despair—if they are the entrances to thy dark and sublime secret."

"I will not take thy answer now;—at midnight thou shalt give it in one word—aye or no! Farewell till then."

The mystic waved his hand; and descending rapidly—was seen no more.

Glyndon rejoined his impatient and wondering friend; but Merton, gazing on his face, saw that a great change had passed there. The flexile and dubious expression of youth was for ever gone. The features were locked, rigid, and stern; and so faded was the natural bloom, that an hour seemed to have done the work of years.

CHAPTER XI.

On returning from Vesuvius or Pompeii, you enter Naples, through its most animated, its most Neapolitan quarter—through that quarter in which Modern life most closely resembles the Antient; and in which, when on a fair day, the thoroughfare swarms alike with Indolence and Trade, you are impressed at once with the recollection of that restless, lively race, from which the population of Naples derives its origin: so that in one day you may see at Pompeii the habitations of a remote age; and on the Mole at Naples, you may imagine you behold the very beings with which those habitations had been peopled. The language of words is dead, but the language of gestures remains little impaired. A fisherman, a peasant, of Naples, will explain to you the motions, the attitudes, the gestures of the figures painted on the antique vases, better than the most learned antiquary of Gottingen or Leipsic.

But now, as the Englishmen rode slowly through the deserted streets, lighted but by the lamps of heaven, all the gaiety of the day was hushed and breathless. Here and there, stretched under a portico or a dingy booth, were sleeping groups of houseless Lazzaroni, a tribe now happily merging this indolent individuality amidst an energetic and active population.

The Englishmen rode on in silence; for Glyndon neither appeared to heed or hear the questions and comments of Merton, and Merton himself was almost as weary as the jaded animal he bestrode.

Suddenly the silence of earth and ocean was broken

by the sound of a distant clock, that proclaimed the last hour of night. Glyndon started from his reverie, and looked anxiously around. As the final stroke died, the noise of hoofs rung on the broad stones of the pavement, and from a narrow street to the right emerged the form of a solitary horseman. He neared the Englishmen, and Glyndon recognised the features and mien of Zicci.

"What! do we meet again, signor?" said Merton, in a vexed but drowsy tone.

"Your friend and I have business together," replied Zicci, as he wheeled his powerful and fiery steed to the side of Glyndon: "but it will be soon transacted. Perhaps you, sir, will ride on to your hotel."

"Alone?"

"There is no danger," returned Zicci, with a slight expression of disdain in his voice.

"None to me, but to Glyndon?"

"Danger from me. Ah—perhaps you are right."

"Go on, my dear Merton," said Glyndon, "I will join you before you reach the hotel."

Merton nodded, whistled, and pushed his horse into a kind of amble.

"Now your answer—quick."

"I have decided:—the love of Isabel has vanished from my heart. The pursuit is over."

"You have decided?"

"I have."

"Adieu! join your friend."

Zicci gave the rein to his horse; it sprang forward with a bound; the sparks flew from its hoofs, and horse and rider disappeared amidst the shadows of the street whence they had emerged.

Merton was surprised to see his friend by his side, a minute after they had parted.

"What business can you have with Zicci? Will you not confide in me?"

"Merton, do not ask me to-night; I am in a dream."

"I do not wonder at it, for even I am in a sleep. Let us push on."

In the retirement of his chamber, Glyndon sought to recollect his thoughts. He sat down on the foot of his bed, and pressed his hands tightly to his throbbing temples. The events of the last few hours—the apparition of the gigantic and shadowy Companion of the Mystic amidst the fires and clouds of Vesuvius—the strange encounter with Zicci himself, on a spot in which he could never have calculated on finding Glyndon, filled his mind with emotions, in which terror and awe the least prevailed. A fire, the train of which had long been laid, was lighted at his heart—the asbestos fire that once lit, is never to be quenched. All his early aspirations—his young ambition—his longings for the laurel, were mingled in one passionate yearning to overpass the bounds of the common knowledge of man, and reach that solemn spot, between two worlds, on which the mysterious stranger appeared to have fixed his home.

Far from recalling with renewed affright the remembrance of the apparition that had so appalled him, the recollection only served to kindle and concentrate his curiosity into a burning focus. He had said aright—love had vanished from his heart; there was no longer a serene space amidst its disordered elements for human affection to move and breathe. The enthusiast was rapt from this earth; and he would have surrendered all that beauty ever promised, that mortal hope ever whispered, for one hour with Zicci beyond the portals of the visible world.

He rose, oppressed and fevered with the new thoughts that raged within him, and threw open his casement for air. The ocean lay suffused in the starry light, and the stillness of the heavens never more eloquently preached the morality of repose to the madness of earthly

passions. But such was Glyndon's mood, that their very hush only served to deepen the wild desires that preyed upon his soul. And the solemn stars, that are mysteries in themselves, seemed by a kindred sympathy to agitate the wings of the spirit no longer contented with its cage. As he gazed, a star shot from its brethren —and vanished from the depth of space!

CHAPTER XII.

The sleep of Glyndon, that night, was unusually profound; and the sun streamed full upon his eyes as he opened them to the day. He rose refreshed, and with a strange sentiment of calmness, that seemed more the result of resolution than exhaustion. The incidents and emotions of the past night had settled into distinct and clear impressions. He thought of them but slightly,—he thought rather of the future. He was as one of the Initiated in the old Egyptian Mysteries, who have crossed the Gate only to look more ardently for the Penetralia.

He dressed himself, and was relieved to find that Merton had joined a party of his countrymen on an excursion to Ischia. He spent the heat of noon in thoughtful solitude, and gradually the image of Isabel returned to his heart. It was a holy—for it was a *human*—image: he had resigned her, and he repented. The light of day served, if not to dissipate, at least to sober, the turbulence and fervour of the preceding night. But was it indeed too late to retract his resolve? Too late! terrible words! Of what do we not repent, when the Ghost of the Deed returns to us to say —"Thou hast no recall?"

He started impatiently from his seat, seized his hat and sword, and strode with rapid steps to the humble abode of the actress.

The distance was considerable, and the air oppressive. Glyndon arrived at the door breathless and heated. He knocked, no answer came: he lifted the latch and

entered. No sound, no sight of life, met his ear and eye. In the front chamber, on a table, lay the guitar of the actress and some manuscript parts in plays. He paused, and summoning courage, tapped at the door which seemed to lead into the inner apartment. The door was ajar; and, hearing no sound within, he pushed it open. It was the sleeping chamber of the young actress—that holiest ground to a lover; and well did the place become the presiding deity; none of the tawdry finery of the Profession was visible on the one hand, none of the slovenly disorder common to the humbler classes of tho South on the other. All was pure and simple; even the ornaments were those of an innocent refinement:—a few books, placed carefully on shelves, a few half-faded flowers in an earthen vase, which was modelled and painted in the Etruscan fashion. The sunlight streamed over the snowy draperies of the bed, and a few articles of clothing, neatly folded, on the chair beside it. Isabel was not there; and Glyndon, as he gazed around, observed that the casement which opened to the ground was wrenched and broken, and several fragments of the shattered glass lay below. The light flashed at once upon Glyndon's mind—the ravisher had borne away his prize. The ominous words of Zicci were fulfilled: it was too late! Wretch that he was! perhaps he might have saved her. But the nurse,—was she gone also? He made the house resound with the name of Gionetta, but there was not even an echo to reply. He resolved to repair at once to the abode of Zicci. On arriving at the palace of the Corsican, he was informed that the signor was gone to the banquet of the Prince di——, and would not return until late. He turned in dismay from the door, and perceived the heavy carriage of the Count Cetoxa rolling along the narrow street. Cetoxa recognised him and stopped the carriage.

"Ah! my dear Signor Glyndon," said he, leaning out of the window, "and how goes your health? You heard the news?"

"What news?" asked Glyndon, mechanically.

"Why the beautiful actress—the wonder of Naples! I always thought she would have good luck."

"Well, well, what of her?"

"The Prince di —— has taken a prodigious fancy to her, and has carried her to his own palace. The Court is a little scandalized."

"The villain! by force?"

"Force! Ha! ha! my dear signor, what need of force to persuade an actress to accept the splendid protection of one of the wealthiest noblemen in Italy? Oh no! you may be sure she went willingly enough. I only just heard the news: the prince himself proclaimed his triumph this morning, and the accommodating Mascari has been permitted to circulate it. I hope the connection will not last long, or we shall lose our best singer—addio."

Glyndon stood mute and motionless. He knew not what to think—to believe—or how to act. Even Merton was not at hand to advise him. His conscience smote him bitterly; and half in despair, half in the courageous wrath of jealousy, he resolved to repair to the palace of the prince himself, and demand his captive in the face of his assembled guests.

CHAPTER XIII.

We must go back to the preceding night. The actress and her nurse had returned from the theatre; and Isabel, fatigued and exhausted, had thrown herself on a sofa, while Gionetta busied herself with the long tresses which, released from the fillet that bound them, half concealed the form of the actress, like a veil of threads of gold; and while she smoothed the luxuriant locks, the old nurse ran gossiping on about the little events of the night,—the scandal and politics of the scenes, and the tire-room.

The clock sounded the hour of midnight—and still Isabel detained the nurse; for a vague and foreboding fear, she could not account for, made her seek to protract the time of solitude and rest.

At length Gionetta's voice was swallowed up in successive yawns. She took her lamp, and departed to her own room, which was placed in the upper story of the house. Isabel was alone. The half hour after midnight sounded dull and distant:—all was still—and she was about to enter her sleeping-room, when she heard the hoofs of a horse at full speed:—the sound ceased;—there was a knock at the door. Her heart beat violently; but fear gave way to another sentiment when she heard a voice, too well known, calling on her name. She went to the door.

"Open Isabel—it is Zicci," said the voice again.

And why did the actress feel fear no more, and why did that virgin hand unbar the door to admit, without a scruple or a doubt, at that late hour, the visit of the fairest cavalier of Naples? I know not;

—but Zicci had become her destiny, and she obeyed the voice of her preserver as if it were the command of Fate.

Zicci entered with a light and hasty step. His horseman's cloak fitted tightly to his noble form; and the raven plumes of his broad hat threw a gloomy shade over his commanding features.

The girl followed him into the room, trembling and blushing deeply,—and stood before him with the lamp she held, shining upward on her cheek, and the long hair that fell like a shower of light over the bare shoulders and heaving bust.

"Isabel," said Zicci, in a voice that spoke deep emotion, "I am by thy side once more to save thee. Not a moment is to be lost. Thou must fly with me, or remain the victim of the Prince di ——. I would have made the charge I now undertake another's:—thou knowest I would—thou knowest it:—but he is not worthy of thee—the cold Englishman! I throw myself at thy feet: have trust in me—and fly."

He grasped her hand passionately as he dropped on his knee, and looked up into her face with his bright, beseeching eyes.

"Fly with thee!" said Isabel, tenderly.

"Thou knowest the penalty:—name—fame—honour—all will be sacrificed if thou dost not."

"Then—then," said the wild girl, falteringly, and turning aside her face, "then I am not indifferent to thee. Thou wouldest not give me to another:—thou lovest me?"

Zicci was silent—but his breast heaved—his cheeks flushed—his eyes darted dark but impassioned fire.

"Speak!" exclaimed Isabel, in jealous suspicion of his silence. "Speak, if thou lovest me."

"I dare not tell thee so:—I will not yet say I love thee."

"Then what matter my fate?" said Isabel, turning pale and shrinking from his side:—leave me;—I fear no danger. My life, and therefore my honour, is in mine own hands."

"Be not so mad," said Zicci. "Hark! do you hear the neigh of my steed? it is an alarm that warns us of the approaching peril:—haste, or you are lost."

"Why do you care for me?" said the girl, bitterly. "Thou hast read my heart: thou knowest that I would fly with thee to the end of the world, if I were but sure of thy love;—that all sacrifice of womanhood's repute were sweet to me, if regarded as the proof and seal of affection. But to be bound beneath the weight of a cold obligation—to be the beggar on the eyes of Indifference—to throw myself on one who loves me not—*that* were indeed the vilest sin of my sex. Ah! Zicci, rather let me die."

She had thrown back her clustering hair from her face as she spoke, and as she now stood with her arms drooping mournfully, and her hands clasped together with the proud bitterness of her wayward spirit, giving new zest and charm to her singular beauty, it was impossible to conceive a sight more irresistible to the senses and the heart.

"Tempt me not to thine own danger—perhaps destruction," exclaimed Zicci, in faltering accents. "Thou canst not dream of what thou wouldest demand—come;" and, advancing, he wound his arm round her waist,—"come, Isabel; believe at least in my friendship—my protection—"

"And not thy love," said the Italian, turning on him her hurried and reproachful eyes. Those eyes met his, and he could not withdraw from the charm of their gaze. He felt her heart throbbing beneath his own—her breath came warm upon his cheek. He trembled—*he!*—the lofty—the mysterious Zicci—who seemed to

stand aloof from his race. With a deep and burning sigh, he murmured, "Isabel, I love thee!"

That beautiful face, bathed in blushes, drooped upon his bosom; and, as he bent down, his lips sought the rosy mouth:—a long and burning kiss—danger—life—the world was forgotten! Suddenly Zicci tore himself from her.

"Oh, what have I said?—It is gone—my power to preserve thee—to guard thee—to foresee the storm in thy skies—is gone for ever. No matter! Haste—haste; and may love supply the loss of prophecy and power!"

Isabel hesitated no more. She threw her mantle over her shoulders, and gathered up her dishevelled hair;—a moment—and she was prepared—when a sudden crash was heard in the inner room.

"Too late!—fool that I was—too late!" cried Zicci, in a sharp tone of agony, as he hurried to the outer door. He opened it, only to be borne back by the press of armed men: behind—before—escape was cut off! The room literally swarmed with the followers of the ravisher, masked—mailed—armed to the teeth.

Isabel was already in the grasp of two of the myrmidons: her shriek smote the ear of Zicci. He sprang forward, and Isabel heard his wild cry in a foreign tongue!—the gleam, the clash of swords. She lost her senses; and when she recovered, she found herself gagged, and in a carriage that was driven rapidly, by the side of a masked and motionless figure. The carriage stopped at the portals of a gloomy mansion. The gates opened noiselessly:—a broad flight of steps, brilliantly illumined, was before her:—she was in the palace of the Prince di ——.

CHAPTER XIV.

The young actress was led to, and left alone in, a chamber adorned with all the luxurious and half-Eastern taste that, at one time, characterised the palaces of the great seigneurs of Italy. Her first thought was for Zicci: was he yet living—had he escaped unscathed the blades of the foe: her new treasure—the new light of her life—her lord, at last her lover.

She had short time for reflection. She heard steps approaching the chamber: she drew back. She placed her hand on the dagger that at all hours she wore concealed in her bosom. Living, or dead, she would be faithful still to Zicci! There was a new motive to the preservation of honour. The door opened, and the Prince entered in a dress that sparkled with jewels.

"Fair and cruel one," said he, advancing, with a half-sneer upon his lip, "thou wilt not too harshly blame the violence of love." He attempted to take her hand as he spoke.

"Nay," said he, as she recoiled, "reflect that thou art now in the power of one that never faltered in the pursuit of an object less dear to him than thou art. Thy lover, presumptuous though he be, is not by to save thee. Mine thou art, but instead of thy master, suffer me to be thy slave."

"My lord," said Isabel, with a stern gravity which perhaps the Stage had conspired with Nature to bestow upon her, "your boast is in vain:—Your power! I am *not* in your power. Life and death are in my own hands. I will not defy—but I do not fear you. I feel—and in some feelings," added Isabel, with a solemnity

almost thrilling, "there is all the strength and all the divinity of knowledge—I feel that I am safe even here: but you—you Prince di ——, have brought danger to your home and hearth!"

The Neapolitan seemed startled by an earnestness and a boldness he was but little prepared for. He was not, however, a man easily intimidated or deterred from any purpose he had formed; and approaching Isabel, he was about to reply with much warmth, real or affected, when a knock was heard at the door of the chamber. The sound was repeated, and the Prince, chafed at the interruption, opened the door, and demanded, impatiently, who had ventured to disobey his orders, and invade his leisure. Mascari presented himself, pale and agitated: "My lord," said he, in a whisper, "pardon me; but a stranger is below, who insists on seeing you; and from some words he let fall, I judged it advisable even to infringe your commands."

"A stranger—and at this hour! What business can he pretend? Why was he even admitted?"

"He asserts that your life is in imminent danger. The source whence it proceeds he will relate to your Excellency alone."

The Prince frowned; but his colour changed. He mused a moment, and then, re-entering the chamber, and advancing towards Isabel, he said,—

"Believe me, fair creature, I have no wish to take advantage of my power. I would fain trust alone to the gentler authorities of affection. Hold yourself queen within these walls more absolutely than you have ever enacted that part on the stage. To-night—farewell! May your sleep be calm, and your dreams propitious to my hopes!"

With these words he retired, and in a few moments Isabel was surrounded by officious attendants, whom she at length, with some difficulty, dismissed; and refusing

to retire to rest, she spent the night in examining the chamber, which she found was secured, and in thoughts of Zicci, in whose power she felt an almost preternatural confidence.

Meanwhile, the Prince descended the stairs, and sought the room into which the stranger had been shown.

He found him wrapped from head to foot in a long robe—half gown, half mantle—such as was sometimes worn by ecclesiastics. The face of this stranger was remarkable: so sunburnt and swarthy were his hues, that he must, apparently, have derived his origin amongst the races of the farthest East. His forehead was lofty, and his eyes so penetrating, yet so calm in their gaze, that the Prince shrunk from them as we shrink from a questioner who is drawing forth the guiltiest secrets of our hearts.

"What would you with me?" asked the Prince, motioning his visitor to a seat.

"Prince di ——," said the stranger, in a voice deep and sweet, but foreign in its accent, "son of the most energetic and masculine race that ever applied godlike genius to the service of the Human Will, with its winding wickedness and its stubborn grandeur—descendant of the great Visconti, in whose chronicles lies the History of Italy in her palmy day, and in whose rise was the development of the mightiest intellect ripened by the most relentless ambition—I come to gaze upon the last star in a darkening firmament. By this hour tomorrow space shall know it not. Man! thy days are numbered!"

"What means this jargon?" said the Prince, in visible astonishment and secret awe. "Comest thou to menace me in my own halls, or wouldest thou warn me of a danger? Art thou some itinerant mountebank, or some unguest-of friend? Speak out, and plainly. What danger threatens me?"

"Zicci!" replied the stranger.

"Ha! ha!" said the Prince, laughing scornfully; "I half suspected thee from the first. Thou art, then, the accomplice or the tool of that most dexterous, but, at present, defeated charlatan. And I suppose thou wilt tell me that, if I were to release a certain captive I have made, the danger would vanish, and the hand of the dial would be put back?"

"Judge of me as thou wilt, Prince di ——. I confess my knowledge of Zicci; a knowledge shared but by a few, who—but this touches thee not. I would save—therefore I warn thee. Dost thou ask me why? I will tell thee. Canst thou remember to have heard wild tales of thy grandsire?—of his desire for a knowledge that passes that of the schools and cloisters?—of a strange man from the East, who was his familiar and master in lore, against which the Vatican has from age to age launched its mimic thunder? Dost thou call to mind the fortunes of thy ancestor?—how he succeeded in youth to little but a name?—how, after a career wild and dissolute as thine, he disappeared from Milan, a pauper and a self-exile?—how, after years spent—none knew in what climes or in what pursuits—he again revisited the city where his progenitors had reigned?—how with him came this wise man of the East—the mystic Mejnour?—how they who beheld him, beheld with amaze and fear that time had ploughed no furrow on his brow—that youth seemed fixed as by a spell upon his face and form? Dost thou know that from that hour his fortunes rose? Kinsmen the most remote died; estate upon estate fell into the hands of the ruined noble. He allied himself with the royalty of Austria—he became the guide of princes, the first magnate of Italy. He founded anew the house of which thou art the last lineal upholder, and transferred its splendour from Milan to the Sicilian realms. Visions of high am-

bition were then present with him nightly and daily. Had he lived, Italy would have known a new dynasty, and the Visconti would have reigned over Magna-Grecia. He was a man, such as the world rarely sees; he was worthy to be of us, worthy to be the pupil of Mejnour: —whom you now see before you."

The Prince, who had listened with deep and breathless attention to the words of his singular guest, started from his seat at his last words. "Impostor!" he cried, "can you dare thus to play with my credulity? Sixty years have passed since my grandsire died, and you, a man younger apparently than myself, have the assurance to pretend to have been his contemporary! But you have imperfectly learned your tale. You know not, it seems, that my grandsire—wise and illustrious indeed, in all save his faith in a charlatan—was found dead in his bed, in the very hour when his colossal plans were ripe for execution, and that Mejnour was guilty of his murder?"

"Alas!" answered the stranger, in a voice of great sadness, "had he but listened to Mejnour, had he delayed the last and most perilous ordeal of daring wisdom until the requisite training and initiation had been completed, your ancestor would have stood with me upon an eminence which the waters of Death itself wash everlastingly, but cannot overflow. Your grandsire resisted my fervent prayers, disobeyed my most absolute commands, and in the sublime rashness of a soul that panted for the last secrets, perished—the victim of his own frenzy."

"He was poisoned, and Mejnour fled."

"Mejnour fled not," answered the stranger, quickly and proudly. "Mejnour could not fly from danger, for to him, danger is a thing long left behind. It was the day before the duke took the fatal draught, which he believed was to confer on the mortal the immortal boon,

that finding my power over him was gone, I abandoned him to his doom. On the night on which your grandsire breathed his last, I was standing alone at moonlight on the ruins of Persepolis,—for my wanderings, space hath no obstacle. But a truce with this;—I loved your grandsire; I would save the last of his race. Oppose not thyself to Zicci. Oppose not thyself to thine evil passions. Draw back from the precipice, while there is yet time. In thy front, and in thine eyes, I detect some of that diviner glory which belonged to thy race. Thou hast in thee some germs of their hereditary genius, but they are choked up by worse than thy hereditary vices. Recollect, by genius thy house rose—by vice it ever failed to perpetuate its power. In the laws which regulate the Universe it is decreed, that nothing wicked can long endure. Be wise, and let history warn thee. Thou standest on the verge of two worlds—the Past and the Future; and voices from either shriek omen in thy ear. I have done. I bid thee farewell."

"Not so;—thou shalt not quit these walls. I will make experiment of thy boasted power. What, ho there! ho!

The Prince shouted; the room was filled with his minions.

"Seize that man!" he cried, pointing to the spot which had been filled by the form of Mejnour. To his inconceivable amaze and horror, the spot was vacant. The mysterious stranger had vanished like a dream.

CHAPTER XV.

It was the first faint and gradual break of the summer dawn; and two men stood in a balcony overhanging a garden fragrant with the scents of the awakening flowers. The stars had not left the sky—the birds were yet silent on the boughs; all was still, hushed, and tranquil; but how different the tranquillity of reviving day from the solemn repose of night! In the music of silence there are a thousand variations. These men, who alone seemed awake in Naples, were Zicci and the mysterious stranger, who had but an hour or two ago startled the Prince di —— in his voluptuous palace.

"No," said the latter, "hadst thou delayed the acceptance of the Arch Gift, until thou hadst attained to the years, and passed through all the desolate bereavements, that chilled and scared myself, ere my researches had made it mine, thou wouldest have escaped the curse of which thou complainest now. Thou wouldest not have mourned over the brevity of human affection as compared to the duration of thine own existence; for thou wouldest have survived the very desire and dream of the love of woman. Brightest, and but for that error, perhaps the loftiest, of the secret and solemn race that fills up the interval in creation between mankind and the demons, age after age wilt thou rue the splendid folly which made thee ask to carry the beauty and the passions of youth into the dreary grandeur of earthly immortality."

"I do not repent, nor shall I," answered Zicci, coldly. "The transport and the sorrow, so wildly blended,

which diversify my doom, are better than the calm and bloodless tenor of thy solitary way. Thou, who lovest nothing, hatest nothing—feelest nothing; and walkest the world with the noiseless and joyless footsteps of a dream!"

"You mistake," replied he who had owned the name of Mejnour,—"though I care not for love, and am dead to every *passion* that agitates the sons of clay, I am not dead to their more serene enjoyments. I have still left to me the sublime pleasures of wisdom and of friendship. I carry down the stream of the countless years, not the turbulent desires of youth—but the calm and spiritual delights of age. Wisely and deliberately I abandoned youth for ever when I separated my lot from men. Let us not envy or reproach each other. I would have saved this Neapolitan, Zicci (since so it now pleases thee to be called), partly because his grandsire was but divided by the last airy barrier from our own brotherhood—partly because I know that in the man himself lurk the elements of ancestral courage and power, which in earlier life would have fitted him for one of us. Earth holds but few to whom nature has given the qualities that can bear the ordeal! But time and excess, that have thickened the grosser senses, have blunted the imagination. I relinquish him to his doom."

"And still then, Mejnour, you cherish the desire to increase our scanty and scattered host by new converts and allies; surely—surely—thy experience might have taught thee, that scarcely once in a thousand years is born the being who can pass through the horrible gates that lead into the worlds without. Is not thy path already strewed with thy victims? Do not their ghastly faces of agony and fear—the bloodstained suicide, the raving maniac—rise before thee, and warn what is yet left to thee of human sympathy from thy insane ambition?"

"Nay," answered Mejnour,—"have I not had success to counterbalance failure? And can I forego this lofty and august hope, worthy alone of our high condition—the hope to form a mighty and numerous race with a force and power sufficient to permit them to acknowledge to mankind their majestic conquests and dominion—to become the true lords of this planet—invaders, perchance of others,—masters of the inimical and malignant tribes by which at this moment we are surrounded,—a race that may proceed, in their deathless destinies, from stage to stage of celestial glory, and rank at last among the nearest ministrants and agents gathered round the Throne of Thrones? What matter a thousand victims for one convert to our band? And you, Zicci (continued Mejnour, after a pause)—you, even you, should this affection for a mortal beauty that you have dared, despite yourself, to cherish, be more than a passing fancy—should it, once admitted into your inmost nature, partake of its bright and enduring essence—even you may brave all things to raise the beloved one into your equal. Nay, interrupt me not. Can you see sickness menace her—danger hover around—years creep on—the eyes grow dim—the beauty fade—while the heart, youthful still, clings and fastens round your own,—can you see this, and know it is yours to ——"

"Cease," cried Zicci, fiercely. "What is all other fate as compared to the death of terror? What! when the coldest sage—the most heated enthusiast—the hardiest warrior, with his nerves of iron—have been found dead in their beds, with straining eyeballs and horrent hair, at the first step of the Dread Progress,—thinkest thou that this weak woman—from whose cheek a sound at the window, the screech of the night-owl, the sight of a drop of blood on a man's sword, would start the colour—could brave one glance of—away! the

very thought of such sights for her, makes even myself a coward!"

"When you told her you loved her—when you clasped her to your breast, you renounced all power to prophesy her future lot, or protect her from harm. Henceforth to her you are human, and human only. How know you, then, to what you may be tempted?—how know you what her curiosity may learn and her courage brave? But enough of this—you are bent on your pursuit?"

"The fiat has gone forth."

"And to-morrow?"

"To-morrow at this hour our bark will be bounding over yonder ocean, and the weight of ages will have fallen from my heart! Fool, *thou* hast given up *thy* youth!"

CHAPTER XVI.

The Prince di —— was not a man whom Naples could suppose to be addicted to superstitious fancies; neither was the age one in which the belief of sorcery was prevalent. Still, in the south of Italy, there was then, and there still lingers, a certain spirit of credulity, which may, ever and anon, be visible amidst the boldest dogmas of their philosophers and sceptics. In his childhood the Prince had learned strange tales of the ambition, the genius, and the career of his grandsire,—and secretly, perhaps influenced by ancestral example, in earlier youth he himself had followed, not only through her legitimate course, but her antiquated and erratic windings. I have, indeed, been shown in Naples a little volume, blazoned with the arms of the Visconti, and ascribed to the nobleman I refer to, which treats of alchemy in a spirit half mocking and half reverential.

Pleasure soon distracted him from such speculations, and his talents, which were unquestionably great, were wholly perverted to extravagant intrigues, or to the embellishment of a gorgeous ostentation with something of classic grace. His immense wealth, his imperious pride, his unscrupulous and daring character, made him an object of no inconsiderable fear to a feeble and timid court: and the ministers of the indolent government willingly connived at excesses which allured him at least from ambition. The strange visit, and yet more strange departure of Mejnour, filled the breast of the Neapolitan with awe and wonder, against which all the haughty arrogance and learned scepticism of his maturer man-

hood combated in vain. The apparition of Mejnour served, indeed, to invest Zicci with a character in which the Prince had not hitherto regarded him. He felt a strange alarm at the rival he had braved—at the foe he had provoked. His night was sleepless, and the next morning he came to the resolution of leaving Isabel in peace until after the banquet of that day, to which he had invited Zicci. He felt as if the death of the mysterious Corsican were necessary for the preservation of his own life; and if at an earlier period of their rivalry he had determined on the fate of Zicci, the warnings of Mejnour only served to confirm his resolve.

"We will try if his magic can invent an antidote to the bane," said he, half aloud and with a gloomy smile, as he summoned Mascari to his presence. The poison which the Prince, with his own hands, mixed into the wine intended for his guest was compounded from materials the secret of which had been one of the proudest heir-looms of that able and evil race which gave to Italy her wisest and fellest tyrants. Its operation was quick, not sudden—it produced no pain—it left on the form no grim convulsion, on the skin no purpling spot, to arouse suspicion,—you might have cut and carved every membrane and fibre of the corpse, but the sharpest eyes of the leech would not have detected the presence of the subtle life-queller. For twelve hours the victim felt nothing, save a joyous and elated exhilaration of the blood—a delicious languor followed, the sure forerunner of apoplexy. No lancet then could save! Apoplexy had run much in the families of the enemies of the Visconti!

The hour of the feast arrived—the guests assembled. There were the flower of the Neapolitan *seignorie*—the descendants of the Norman, the Teuton, the Goth; for Naples had then a nobility, but derived it from the

north, which has indeed been the *Nutrix Leonum*, the nurse of the lion-hearted chivalry of the world.

Last of the guests came Zicci, and the crowd gave way as the dazzling foreigner moved along to the lord of the palace. The Prince greeted him with a meaning smile, to which Zicci answered by a whisper, "He who plays with loaded dice does not always win."

The Prince bit his lip; and Zicci, passing on, seemed deep in conversation with the fawning Mascari.

"Who is the Prince's heir?" asked the Corsican.

"A distant relation on the mother's side; with his excellency dies the male line."

"Is the heir present at our host's banquet?"

"No; they are not friends."

"No matter; he will be here to-morrow!"

Mascari stared in surprise; but the signal for the banquet was given, and the guests were marshalled to the board. As was the custom, the feast took place at midday. It was a long oval hall, the whole of one side opening by a marble colonnade upon a court or garden, in which the eye rested gratefully upon cool fountains and statues of whitest marble, half sheltered by orange trees. Every art that luxury could invent to give freshness and coolness to the languid and breezeless heat of the day without (a day on which the breath of the sirocco was abroad), had been called into existence. Artificial currents of air through invisible tubes, silken blinds waving to and fro as if to cheat the senses into the belief of an April wind, and miniature *jets d'eau* in each corner of the apartment, gave to the Italians the same sense of exhilaration and *comfort* (if I may use the word) which the well-drawn curtains and the blazing hearth afford to the children of colder climes.

The conversation was somewhat more lively and intellectual than is common among the languid pleasure-hunters of the south; for the Prince, himself

accomplished, sought his acquaintance not only amongst the *beaux esprits* of his own country, but amongst the gay foreigners who adorned and relieved the monotony of the Neapolitan circles. There were present two or three of the brilliant Frenchmen of the old regime, and their peculiar turn of thought and wit was well calculated for the meridian of a society that made the *dolce far niente* at once its philosophy and its faith. The Prince, however, was more silent than usual; and when he sought to rouse himself, his spirits were forced and exaggerated. To the manners of his host, those of Zicci afforded a striking contrast. The bearing of this singular person was at all times characterised by a calm and polished ease, which was attributed by the courtiers to the long habit of society. He could scarcely be called gay; yet few persons more tended to animate the general spirits of a convivial circle. He seemed, by a kind of intuition, to elicit from each companion the qualities in which he most excelled; and a certain tone of latent mockery that characterised his remarks upon the topics on which the conversation fell, seemed to men who took nothing in earnest to be the language both of wit and wisdom. To the Frenchmen, in particular, there was something startling in his intimate knowledge of the minutest events in their own capital and country, and his profound penetration (evinced but in epigrams and sarcasms) into the eminent characters who were then playing a part upon the great stage of Continental intrigue. It was while this conversation grew animated, and the feast was at its height, that Glyndon (who, as the reader will recollect, had resolved, on learning from Cetoxa the capture of the actress, to seek the Prince himself), arrived at the palace. The porter, perceiving by his dress that he was not one of the invited guests, told him that his Excellency was engaged, and on no account could be disturbed; and Glyndon then, for the

first time, became aware of how strange and embarrassing was the duty he had taken on himself. To force an entrance into the banquet hall of a great and powerful noble, surrounded by the rank of Naples, and to arraign him for what to his boon companions would appear but an act of gallantry, was an exploit that could not fail to be at once ludicrous and impotent. He mused a moment, and remembering that Zicci was among the guests, determined to apply himself to the Corsican. He therefore, slipping a few crowns into the porter's hand, said that he was commissioned to seek the Signor Zicci upon an errand of life and death; and easily won his way across the court, and into the interior building. He passed up the broad staircase, and the voices and merriment of the revellers smote his ear at a distance. At the entrance of the reception rooms he found a page, whom he despatched with a message to Zicci. The page did the errand; and the Corsican, on hearing the whispered name of Glyndon, turned to his host.

"Pardon me, my lord: an English friend of mine, the Signor Glyndon (not unknown by name to your Excellency) waits without—the business must indeed be urgent on which he has sought me in such an hour. You will forgive my momentary absence."

"Nay, signor," answered the Prince, courteously, but with a sinister smile on his countenance, "would it not be better for your friend to join us? An Englishman is welcome everywhere; and even were he a Dutchman, your friendship would invest his presence with attraction. Pray his attendance—we would not spare you even for a moment."

Zicci bowed—the page was despatched with all flattering messages to Glyndon—a seat next to Zicci was placed for him, and the young Englishman entered.

"You are most welcome, sir. I trust your business to our illustrious guest is of good omen and pleasant

import. If you bring evil news, defer it, I pray you."

Glyndon's brow was sullen, and he was about to startle the guests by his reply, when Zicci, touching his arm significantly, whispered in English, "I know why you have sought me. Be silent, and witness what ensues."

"You know, then, that Isabel, whom you boasted you had the power to save from danger——"

"Is in this house?—yes. I know also that murder sits at the right hand of our host. Be still, and learn the fate that awaits the foes of Zicci."

"My lord," said the Corsican, speaking aloud, "the Signor Glyndon has indeed brought me tidings which, though not unexpected, are unwelcome. I learn that which will oblige me to leave Naples to-morrow, though I trust but for a short time. I have now a new motive to make the most of the present hour."

"And what, if I may venture to ask, may be the cause which brings such affliction on the fair dames of Naples?"

"It is the approaching death of one who honoured me with most loyal friendship," replied Zicci, gravely. "Let us not speak of it—grief cannot put back the dial. As we supply by new flowers those that fade in our vases, so it is the secret of worldly wisdom to replace by fresh friendships those that fade from our path."

"True philosophy," exclaimed the Prince. "'Not to admire' was the Roman's maxim; never to mourn is mine. There is nothing in life to grieve for, save, indeed, Signor Zicci, when some beauty on whom we have set our heart, slips from our grasp. In such a moment we have need of all our wisdom not to succumb to despair and shake hands with death. What say you, signor? You smile. Such never could be your lot.

Pledge me in a sentiment—'Long life to the fortunate lover—a quick release to the baffled suitor!'"

"I pledge you," said Zicci. And as the fatal wine was poured into his glass, he repeated, fixing his eyes on the Prince, "I pledge you even in this wine!"

He lifted the glass to his lips. The Prince seemed ghastly pale, while the gaze of the Corsican bent upon him with an intent and stern brightness that the conscience-stricken host cowered and quailed beneath. Not till he had drained the draught, and replaced the glass upon the board, did Zicci turn his eyes from the Prince; and he then said, "Your wine has been kept too long—it has lost its virtues. It might disagree with many; but do not fear—it will not harm me, Prince. Signor Mascari, you are a judge of the grape—will you favour us with your opinion?"

"Nay," answered Mascari, with well-affected composure, "I like not the wines of Cyprus—they are heating. Perhaps Signor Glyndon may not have the same distaste. The English are said to love their potations warm and pungent."

"Do you wish my friend also to taste the wine, Prince?" said Zicci. "Recollect all cannot drink it with the same impunity as myself."

"No," said the Prince, hastily; "if you do not recommend the wine, Heaven forbid that we should constrain our guests! My Lord Duke," turning to one of the Frenchmen, "yours is the true soil of Bacchus. What think you of this cask from Burgundy? has it borne the journey?"

"Ah!" said Zicci, "let us change both the wine and the theme." With that the Corsican grew more animated and brilliant. Never did wit more sparkling, airy, exhilarating, flash from the lips of reveller. His spirits fascinated all present—even the Prince himself—even Glyndon—with a strange and wild contagion. The

former, indeed, whom the words and gaze of Zicci, when he drained the poison, had filled with fearful misgivings, now hailed in the brilliant eloquence of his wit a certain sign of the operation of the bane. The wine circulated fast; but none seemed conscious of its effects. One by one the rest of the party fell into a charmed and spell-bound silence, as Zicci continued to pour forth sally upon sally, tale upon tale. They hung on his words—they almost held their breath to listen. Yet how bitter was his mirth—how full of contempt for all things—how deeply steeped in the coldness of the derision that makes sport of life itself!

Night came on: the room grew dim, and the feast had lasted several hours longer than was the customary duration of similar entertainments at that day. Still the guests stirred not, and still Zicci continued, with glittering eye and mocking lip, to lavish his stores of intellect and anecdote, when suddenly the moon rose, and shed its rays over the flowers and fountains in the court without, leaving the room itself half in shadow and half tinged by a quiet and ghostly light.

It was then that Zicci rose. "Well, gentlemen," said he, "we have not yet wearied our host, I hope, and his garden offers a new temptation to protract our stay. Have you no musicians among your train, Prince, that might regale our ears while we inhale the fragrance of your orange trees?"

"An excellent thought," said the Prince. "Mascari, see to the music."

The party rose simultaneously to adjourn to the garden; and then, for the first time, the effect of the wine they had drunk seemed to make itself felt.

With flushed cheeks and unsteady steps they came into the open air, which tended yet more to stimulate that glowing fever of the grape. As if to make up for the silence with which the guests had hitherto listened

to Zicci, every tongue was now loosened—every man talked, no man listened. In the serene beauty of the night and scene, there was something wild and fearful in the contrast of the hubbub and Babel of these disorderly roysterers. One of the Frenchmen, in especial, the young Duc de R——,—a nobleman of the highest rank, and of all the quick, vivacious, and irascible temperament of his countrymen,—was particularly noisy and excited. And as circumstances, the remembrance of which is still preserved among certain circles of Naples, rendered it afterwards necessary that the Duc should himself give evidence of what occurred, I will here translate the short account he drew up, and which was kindly submitted to me some few years ago by my accomplished and lively friend, il Cavaliere di B——."

"I never remember," writes the Duc, "to have felt my spirits so excited as on that evening; we were like so many boys released from school, jostling each other as we reeled or ran down the flight of seven or eight stairs that led from the colonnade into the garden,—some laughing, some whooping, some scolding, some babbling. The wine had brought out, as it were, each man's inmost character. Some were loud and quarrelsome, others sentimental and whining; some whom we had hitherto thought dull, most mirthful; some whom we had ever regarded as discreet and taciturn, most garrulous and uproarious. I remember that in the midst of our most clamorous gaiety my eye fell upon the foreign cavalier, Signor Zicci, whose conversation had so enchanted us all; and I felt a certain chill come over me to perceive that he bore the same calm and unsympathising smile upon his countenance which had characterised it in his singular and curious stories of the court of Louis XV. I felt, indeed, half inclined to seek a quarrel with one

whose composure was almost an insult to our disorder. Nor was such an effect of this irritating and mocking tranquillity confined to myself alone. Several of the party have told me since that on looking at Zicci they felt their blood rise and their hands wander to their sword-hilts. There seemed in the icy smile a very charm to wound vanity and provoke rage. It was at this moment that the Prince came up to me, and, passing his arm into mine, led me a little apart from the rest. He had certainly indulged in the same excess as ourselves, but it did not produce the same effect of noisy excitement. There was, on the contrary, a certain cold arrogance and supercilious scorn in his bearing and language, which, even while affecting so much caressing courtesy towards me, roused my self-love against him. He seemed as if Zicci had infected him, and that in imitating the manner of his guest he surpassed the original. He rallied me on some court gossip which had honoured my name by associating it with a certain beautiful and distinguished Sicilian lady, and affected to treat with contempt that which, had it been true, I should have regarded as a boast. He spoke, indeed, as if he himself had gathered all the flowers of Naples, and left us foreigners only the gleanings he had scorned; at this my natural and national gallantry was piqued, and I retorted by some sarcasms that I should certainly have spared had my blood been cooler. He laughed heartily, and left me in a strange fit of resentment and anger. Perhaps (I must own the truth) the wine had produced in me a wild disposition to take offence and provoke quarrel. As the Prince left me, I turned, and saw Zicci at my side.

"'The Prince is a braggart,' said he, with the same smile that displeased me before. "He would monopolise all fortune and all love. Let us take our revenge.'

"'And how?'

"'He has at this moment, in his house, the most

enchanting singer in Naples—the celebrated Isabel di Pisani. She is here, it is true, not by her own choice; he carried her hither by force, but he will pretend to swear that she adores him. Let us insist on his producing this secret treasure, and, when she enters, the Duc de R—— can have no doubt that his flatteries and attentions will charm the lady, and provoke all the jealous fears of our host. It would be a fair revenge upon his imperious self-conceit.'

"This suggestion delighted me. I hastened to the Prince. At that instant the musicians had just commenced. I waved my hand, ordered the music to stop, and addressing the Prince, who was standing in the centre of one of the gayest groups, complained of his want of hospitality in affording to us such poor proficients in the art, while he reserved for his own solace the lute and voice of the first performer in Naples. I demanded, half laughingly, half seriously, that he should produce the Pisani. My demand was received with shouts of applause by the rest. We drowned the replies of our host with uproar, and would hear no denial. 'Gentlemen,' at last said the Prince, when he could obtain an audience, 'even were I to assent to your proposal, I could not induce the Signora to present herself before an assemblage as riotous as they are noble. You have too much chivalry to use compulsion with her, though the Duc de R—— forgets himself sufficiently to administer it to me.'

"I was stung by this taunt, however well deserved. 'Prince,' said I, 'I have for the indelicacy of compulsion so illustrious an example, that I cannot hesitate to pursue the path honoured by your own footsteps. All Naples knows that the Pisani despises at once your gold and your love,—that force alone could have brought her under your roof and that you refuse to produce her, because you fear her complaints, and know enough of

the chivalry your vanity sneers at to feel assured that the gentlemen of France are not more disposed to worship beauty than to defend it from wrong.'

"'You speak well, sir,' said Zicci, gravely. 'The Prince dare not produce his prize!'

"The Prince remained speechless for a few moments, as if with indignation. At last he broke out into expressions the most injurious and insulting against Signor Zicci and myself. Zicci replied not—I was more hot and hasty. The guests appeared to delight in our dispute. None except Mascari, whom we pushed aside and disdained to hear, strove to conciliate; some took one side, some another. The issue may be well foreseen. Swords were drawn. I had left mine in the ante-room—Zicci offered me his own—I seized it eagerly. There might be some six or eight persons engaged in a strange and confused kind of *mêlée*, but the Prince and myself only sought each other. The noise around us—the confusion of the guests—the cries of the musicians—the clash of our own swords, only served to stimulate our unhappy fury. We feared to be interrupted by the attendants, and fought like madmen, without skill or method. I thrust and parried mechanically, blind and frantic as if a demon had entered into me, till I saw the Prince stretched at my feet, bathed in his blood, and Zicci bending over him and whispering in his ear. The sight cooled us all—the strife ceased. We gathered in shame, remorse, and horror round our ill-fated host; but it was too late—his eyes rolled fearfully in his head, and still he struggled to release himself from Zicci's arms, who continued to whisper (I trust divine comfort) in his ear. I have seen men die, but never one who wore such horror on his countenance. At last all was over; Zicci rose from the corpse, and, taking, with great composure, his sword from my hand,—'Ye are witnesses, gentlemen,' said he, calmly, 'that the Prince brought his fate

upon himself. The last of that illustrious house ha perished in a brawl.'

"I saw no more of Zicci—I hastened to the French ambassador to narrate the event, and abide the issue. I am grateful to the Neapolitan government, and to the illustrious heir of the unfortunate nobleman, for the lenient and generous, yet just, interpretation put upon a misfortune the memory of which will afflict me to the last hour of my life.

(Signed) "Louis Victor, Duc de R."

In the above memorial, the reader will find the most exact and minute account yet given of an event which created the most lively sensation at Naples in that day, and the narration of which first induced me to collect the materials of this history—which the reader will perceive, as it advances, is altogether different in its nature, its agencies, and its aims, from those tales of external terror, whether derived from ingenious imposture or supernatural mystery, that have given life to French melodrama or German romance.

CHAPTER XVII.

Glyndon had taken no part in the affray—neither had he participated largely in the excesses of the revel. For his exemption from both he was perhaps indebted to the whispered exhortations of Zicci. When the last rose from the corpse and withdrew from that scene of confusion, Glyndon remarked, that in passing the crowd he touched Mascari on the shoulder, and said something which the Englishman did not overhear. Glyndon followed Zicci into the banquet-room — which, save where the moonlight slept on the marble floor, was wrapt in the sad and gloomy shadows of the advancing night.

"How could you foretell this fearful event?—he fell not by your arm!" said Glyndon in a tremulous and hollow tone.

"The general who calculates on the victory does not fight in person," answered Zicci; "but enough of this —meet me at midnight by the seashore—half a mile to the left of your hotel,—you will know the spot, by a rude pillar, the only one near ——, to which a broken chain is attached. There and then will be the crisis of your fate—go—I have business here yet—remember, Isabel is still in the house of the dead man."

As Glyndon yet hesitated, strange thoughts, doubts and fears that longed for speech crowding within him, Mascari approached, and Zicci, turning to the Italian, and waving his hand to Glyndon, drew the former aside. Glyndon slowly departed.

"Mascari," said Zicci, "your patron is no more—

your services will be valueless to his heir—a sober man, whom poverty has preserved from vice. For yourself, thank me that I do not give you up to the executioner —recollect the wine of Cyprus. Well, never tremble, man, it could not act on me, though it might re-act on others;—in that it is a common type of crime. I forgive you; and if the wine should kill me, I promise you that my ghost shall not haunt so worshipful a penitent. Enough of this; conduct me to the chamber of Isabel di Pisani. You have no farther need of her. The death of the jailer opens the cell of the captive. Be quick—I would be gone." Mascari muttered some inaudible words, bowed low, and led the way to the chamber in which Isabel was confined.

CHAPTER XVIII.

It wanted several minutes of midnight, and Glyndon repaired to the appointed spot. The mysterious empire which Zicci had acquired over him was still more solemnly confirmed by the events of the last few hours, —the sudden fate of the Prince, so deliberately foreshadowed, and yet so seemingly accidental—brought out by causes the most commonplace, and yet associated with words the most prophetic—impressed him with the deepest sentiments of admiration and awe. It was as if this dark and wondrous being would convert the most ordinary events and the meanest instruments into the agencies of his inscrutable will—yet, if so, why have permitted the capture of Isabel? Why not have prevented the crime rather than punished the criminal? And did Zicci really feel love for Isabel? Love, and yet offer to resign her to himself—to a rival whom his arts could not fail to baffle. He no longer reverted to the belief that Zicci or Isabel had sought to dupe him into marriage. His fear and reverence for the former now forbade the notion of so poor an imposture. Did he any longer love Isabel himself? No—when that morning he heard of her danger—he had, it is true, returned to the sympathies and the fears of affection; but with the death of the Prince her image faded again from his heart—and he felt no jealous pang at the thought that she had been saved by Zicci—that at that moment, she was perhaps beneath his roof. Whoever has, in the course of his life, indulged the absorbing passion of the gamester, will remember how all other

pursuits and objects vanished from his mind; how solely he was wrapped in the one wild delusion; with what a sceptre of magic power the despot demon ruled every feeling and every thought. Far more intense than the passion of the gamester was the frantic yet sublime desire that mastered the breast of Glyndon. He would be the rival of Zicci not in human and perishable affections, but in preternatural and eternal lore. He would have laid down life with content, nay rapture, as the price of learning those solemn secrets which separated the stranger from mankind. Such fools are we when we aspire to be overwise! To be enamoured too madly of the goddess of goddesses is only to embrace a cloud, and to forfeit alike heaven and earth.

The night was most lovely and serene, and the waves scarcely rippled at his feet, as the Englishman glided on by the cool and starry beach. At length he arrived at the spot, and there, leaning against the broken pillar, he behold a man wrapped in a long mantle, and in an attitude of profound repose. He approached and uttered the name of Zicci. The figure turned, and he saw the face of a stranger; a face not stamped by the glorious beauty of the Corsican, but equally majestic in its aspect, and, perhaps, still more impressive from the mature age and the passionless depth of thought that characterised the expanded forehead and deep-set but piercing eyes.

"You seek Zicci," said the stranger; "he will be here anon; but, perhaps, he whom you see before you is more connected with your destiny. and more disposed to realise your dreams."

"Hath the earth then another Zicci?"

"If not," replied the stranger, "why do you cherish the hope and the wild faith to be yourself a Zicci? Think you that none others have burned with the same godlike dream? Who, indeed, in his first youth—youth

when the soul is nearer to the heaven from which it sprung—and its divine and primal longings are not all effaced by the sordid passions and petty cares that are begot in time?—who is there in youth that has not nourished the belief that the universe has secrets not known to the common herd, and panted, as the hart for the water-springs, for the fountains that lie hid and far away amidst the broad wilderness of trackless science? The music of the fountain is heard in the soul within, till the steps, deceived and erring, rove away from its waters, and the wanderer dies in the mighty desert. Think you that none who have cherished the hope have found the truth? or that the yearning after the Ineffable Knowledge was given to us utterly in vain? No. Every desire in human hearts is but a glimpse of things that exist—alike distant and divine. No! in the world there have been, from age to age, some brighter and happier spirits who have won to the air in which the beings above mankind move and breathe. Zicci, great though he be, stands not alone. He has his predecessors, his contemporary rivals, and long lines of successors are yet to come?"

"And will you tell me," said Glyndon, "that in yourself I behold one of that mighty few over whom Zicci has no superiority in power and wisdom?"

"In me," answered the stranger, "you see one from whom Zicci himself learned many of his loftiest secrets. Before his birth my wisdom was! On these shores—on this spot—have I stood in ages that your chronicles but feebly reach. The Phœnician—the Greek—the Oscan—the Roman—the Lombard—I have seen them all!—leaves gay and glittering on the trunk of the universal life—scattered in due season and again renewed; till, indeed, the same race that gave its glory to the ancient world bestowed a second youth on the new. For the pure Greeks—the Hellenes—whose origin has

bewildered your dreaming scholars—were of the same great family as the Norman tribe, born to be the lords of the universe, and in no land on earth destined to be the hewers of wood. Even the dim traditions of the learned that bring the sons of Hellas from the vast and undetermined territories of Northern Thrace, to be the victors of the pastoral Pelasgi, and the founders of the line of demi-gods, might serve you to trace back their primeval settlements to the same region whence, in later times, the Norman warriors broke on the dull and savage hordes of the Celt, and became the Greeks of the Christian world. But this interests you not, and you are wise in your indifference. Not in the knowledge of things without, but in the perfection of the soul within, lies the empire of man aspiring to be more than men."

"And what books contain that science—from what laboratory is it wrought?"

"Nature supplies the materials: they are around you in your daily walks; in the herbs that the beast devours and the chemist disdains to cull; in the elements, from which matter in its meanest and its mightiest shapes is deduced; in the wide bosom of the air; in the black abysses of the earth;—everywhere are given to mortals the resources and libraries of immortal lore. But as the simplest problems in the simplest of all studies are obscure to one who braces not his mind to their comprehension; as the rower in yonder vessel cannot tell you why two circles can touch each other only in one point;—so, though all earth were carved over and inscribed with the letters of diviner knowledge, the characters would be valueless to him who does not pause to inquire the language and meditate the truth. Young man, if thy imagination is vivid, if thy heart is daring, if thy curiosity is insatiate, I will accept thee as my pupil. But the first lessons are stern and dread."

"If thou hast mastered them, why not I?" answered Glyndon, boldly. "I have felt from my boyhood that strange mysteries were reserved for my career, and from the proudest ends of ordinary ambition I have carried my gaze into the cloud and darkness that stretch beyond. The instant I beheld Zicci, I felt as if I had discovered the guide and the tutor for which my youth had idly languished and vainly burned."

"And to me his duty can be transferred," replied the stranger. "Yonder lies, anchored in the bay, the vessel in which Zicci seeks a fairer home; a little while and the breeze will rise, the sail will swell, and the stranger will have passed like a wind away. Still, like the wind, he leaves in thy heart the seeds that may bear the blossom and the fruit. Zicci hath performed his task—he is wanted no more; the perfecter of his work is at thy side. He comes—I hear the dash of the oar. You will have your choice submitted to you. According as you decide, we shall meet again." With these words the stranger moved slowly away, and disappeared beneath the shadow of the cliffs. A boat glided rapidly across the waters—it touched land, a man leapt on shore, and Glyndon recognised Zicci.

"I give thee, Glyndon, I give thee no more the option of happy love and serene enjoyment. That hour is past, and fate has linked the hand that might have been thine own to mine. But I have ample gifts to bestow upon thee if thou wilt abandon the hope that gnaws thy heart, and the realisation of which even I have not the power to foresee. Be thine ambition human, and I can gratify it to the full. Men desire four things in life—love, wealth, fame, power. The first I cannot give thee—no matter why; the rest are at my disposal. Select which of them thou wilt, and let us part in peace."

"Such are not the gifts I covet: I choose knowledge—which indeed, as the schoolman said, *is* power, and

the loftiest—that knowledge must be thine own. For this, and for this alone, I surrendered the love of Isabel; this, and this alone, must be my recompense."

"I cannot gainsay thee, though I can warn. The desire to learn does not always contain the faculty to acquire. I can give thee, it is true, the teacher, the rest must depend on thee. Be wise in time, and take that which I can assure to thee."

"Answer me but these questions, and according to your answer I will decide. Is it in the power of man to attain intercourse with the beings of other worlds? Is it in the power of man to read the past and the future? and to insure life against the sword, and against disease?"

"All this may be possible," answered Zicci evasively, "to the few. But for one who attains such secrets, millions may perish in the attempt."

"One question more. Thou——"

"Beware! Of myself, as I have said before, I render no account."

"Well, then, the stranger I have met this night—are his boasts to be believed? Is he in truth one of the chosen seers whom you allow to have mastered the mysteries I yearn to fathom?"

"Rash man," said Zicci, in a tone of compassion, "thy crisis is past, and thy choice made. I can only bid thee be bold and prosper. Yes, I resign thee to a master who *has* the power and the will to open to thee the gates of the awful world. Thy weal or woe are as nought in the eyes of his relentless wisdom. I would bid him spare thee, but he will heed me not. Mejnour, receive thy pupil!" Glyndon turned, and his heart beat when he perceived that the stranger, whose footsteps he had not heard on the pebbles, whose approach he had not beheld in the moonlight, was once more by his side.

Glyndon's eyes followed the receding form of the mysterious Corsican. He saw him enter the boat, and he then for the first time noticed that besides the rowers there was a female, who stood up as Zieci gained the boat. Even at this distance he recognised the once-adored form of Isabel. She waved her hand to him, and across the still and shining air came her voice, mournfully and sweetly in her native tongue, "Farewell, Clarence—farewell, farewell."

He strove to answer, but the voice touched a chord at his heart, and the words failed him. Isabel was then lost for ever—gone with this dread stranger—darkness was round her lot. And he himself had decided her fate and his own! The boat bounded on, the soft waves flashed and sparkled beneath the oars, and it was along one sapphire track of moonlight that the frail vessel bore away the lovers. Farther and farther from his gaze sped the boat, till at last the speck, scarcely visible, touched the side of the ship that lay lifeless in the glorious bay. At that instant, as if by magic, up sprang with a glad murmur the playful and refreshing wind. And Glyndon turned to Mejnour, and broke the silence.

"Tell me—if thou canst read the future—tell me that *her* lot will be fair, and that *her* choice at least is wise."

"My pupil," answered Mejnour, in a voice the calmness of which well accorded with the chilling words, "thy first task must be to withdraw all thought, feeling, sympathy from others. The elementary stage of knowledge is to make self, and self alone, thy study and thy world. Thou hast decided thine own career, thou hast renounced love, thou hast rejected wealth, fame, and the vulgar pomps of power. What, then, are all mankind to thee? To perfect thy faculties and concentrate thy emotions is henceforth thy only aim."

"And will happiness be the end?"

"If happiness exist," answered Mejnour, "it must be centred in A SELF to which all passion is unknown. But happiness is the last state of being, and as yet thou art on the threshold of the first!"

As Mejnour spoke, the distant vessel spread its sails to the wind, and moved slowly along the deep. Glyndon sighed, and the pupil and the master retraced their steps towards the city.

BOOK II.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

It was about a month after the date of Zicci's departure and Glyndon's introduction to Mejnour, when two Englishmen were walking arm-in-arm through the Toledo.

"I tell you," said one (who spoke warmly), "that if you have a particle of common sense left in you, you will accompany me to England. This Mejnour is an impostor more dangerous—because more in earnest—than Zicci. After all, what do his promises amount to? You allow that nothing can be more equivocal. You say that he has left Naples—that he has selected a retreat more genial than the crowded thoroughfares of men to the studies in which he is to initiate you; and this retreat is among the haunts of the fiercest bandits of Italy,—haunts which Justice itself dare not penetrate:—fitting hermitage for a sage! I tremble for you. What if this stranger, of whom nothing is known, be leagued with the robbers; and these lures for your credulity bait but the traps for your property—perhaps your life? You might come off cheaply by a ransom of half your fortune: you smile indignantly;—well! put common sense out of the question: take your own view of the matter. You are to undergo an ordeal which Mejnour himself does not profess to describe as a very tempting one. It may, or it may not, succeed; if it does not, you are menaced with the darkest evils; and if it does, you cannot be better off

than the dull and joyless mystic whom you have taken for a master. Away with this folly. Enjoy youth while it is left to you. Return with me to England: forget these dreams. Enter your proper career; form affections more respectable than those which lured you awhile to an Italian adventuress, and become a happy and distinguished man. This is the advice of sober friendship; yet the promises I hold out to you are fairer than those of Mejnour."

"Merton," said Glyndon, doggedly, "I cannot, if I would, yield to your wishes. A power that is above me urges me on: I cannot resist its fascination. I will proceed to the last in the strange career I have commenced. Think of me no more. Follow yourself the advice you give to me—and be happy."

"This is madness," said Merton, passionately, but with a tear in his eye; "your health is already failing; you are so changed I should scarcely know you;—come—I have already had your name entered in my passport: in another hour I shall be gone, and you, boy that you are, will be left without a friend to the deceits of your own fancy, and the machinations of this relentless mountebank."

"Enough," said Glyndon, coldly; "you cease to be an effective counsellor when you suffer your prejudices to be thus evident. I have already had ample proof," added the Englishman, and his pale cheek grew more pale, "of the power of this man—if man he be, which I sometimes doubt—and, come life, come death, I will not shrink from the paths that allure me. Farewell, Merton—if we never meet again;—if you hear amidst our old and cheerful haunts that Clarence Glyndon sleeps the last sleep by the shores of Naples, or amidst the Calabrian hills—say to the friends of our youth, 'He died worthily, as thousands of martyr-students have died before him, in the pursuit of knowledge.'"

He wrung Merton's hand as he spoke, darted from his side, and disappeared amidst the crowd.

That day Merton left Naples: the next morning Glyndon also quitted the City of Delight, alone and on horseback. He bent his way into those picturesque but dangerous parts of the country, which at that time were infested by banditti, and which few travellers dared to pass, even in broad daylight, without a strong escort. A road more lonely cannot well be conceived than that on which the hoofs of his steed, striking upon the fragments of rock that encumbered the neglected way, woke a dull and melancholy echo. Large tracts of waste land, varied by the rank and profuse foliage of the south, lay before him: occasionally a wild goat peeped down from some rocky crag, or the discordant cry of a bird of prey, startled in its sombre haunt, was heard above the hills. These were the only signs of life; not a human being was met—not a hut was visible. Wrapped in his own ardent and solemn thoughts, the young man continued his way, till the sun had spent its noon-day heat, and a breeze that announced the approach of eve sprung up from the unseen ocean that lay far distant to his sight. It was then that a turn in the road brought before him one of those long, desolate, gloomy villages which are found in the interior of the Neapolitan dominions;—and now he came upon a small chapel on one side of the road, with a gaudily-painted image of the Virgin in the open shrine. Around this spot, which in the heart of a Christian land retained the vestige of the old idolatry (for just such were the chapels that in the Pagan age were dedicated to the demon-saints of mythology), gathered six or seven miserable and squalid wretches, whom the Curse of the Leper had cut off from mankind. They set up a shrill cry as they turned their ghastly visages towards the horseman; and without stirring from the spot, stretched

out their gaunt arms, and implored charity in the name of the Merciful Mother. Glyndon hastily threw them some small coins, and, turning away his face, clapped spurs to his horse, and relaxed not his speed till he entered the village. On either side the narrow and miry street, fierce and haggard forms—some leaning against the ruined walls of blackened huts—some seated at the threshold—some lying at full length in the mud—presented groups that at once invoked pity and aroused alarm; pity for their squalor—alarm for the ferocity imprinted on their savage aspects. They gazed at him, grim and sullen, as he rode slowly up the rugged street; sometimes whispering significantly to each other, but without attempting to stop his way. Even the children hushed their babble, and ragged urchins, devouring him with sparkling eyes, muttered to their mothers, "We shall feast well to-morrow!" It was, indeed, one of those hamlets in which Law sets not its sober step—in which Violence and Murder house secure—hamlets common then in the wilder parts of Italy—in which the peasant was but the gentler name for the robber.

Glyndon's heart somewhat failed him as he looked around, and the question he desired to ask died upon his lips. At length, from one of the dismal cabins emerged a form superior to the rest. Instead of the patched and ragged overall which made the only garment of the men he had hitherto seen, the dress of this person was characterised by all the trappings of Calabrian bravery. Upon his raven hair, the glossy curls of which made a notable contrast to the matted and elfin locks of the savages around, was placed a cloth cap with a gold tassel that hung down to his shoulder; his mustaches were trimmed with care, and a silk kerchief of gay hues was twisted round a well-shaped but sinewy throat; a short jacket of rough cloth

was decorated with several rows of gilt filagree buttons; his nether garments fitted tight to his limbs, and were curiously braided; while, in a broad particoloured-sash were placed four silver-hilted pistols; and the sheathed knife, usually worn by Italians of the lower order, was mounted in ivory elaboratcly carved. A small carbine of handsome workmanship was slung across his shoulder, and completed his costume. The man himself was of middle size, athletic, yet slender—with straight and regular features — sunburnt, but not swarthy; and an expression of countenance which, though reckless and bold, had in it frankness rather than ferocity, and, if defying, was not altogether unprepossessing.

Glyndon, after eyeing this figure for some moments with great attention, checked his rein, and asked in the provincial *patois*, with whieh he was tolerably familiar, the way to the "Castle of the Mountain."

The man liftcd his eap as he heard the question, and, approaching Glyndon, laid his hand upon the neek of the horse, and said in a low voiee, "Then you are the cavalier whom our patron the signor expeeted. He bade me wait for you here, and lead you to the castle. And indeed, signor, it might have been unfortunate if I had negleeted to obey the command."

The man then, drawing a little asidc, called out to the bystanders in a loud voice, "Ho, ho, my friends, pay henceforth and for ever all respeet to this worshipful cavalier. He is the aeccpted guest of our blessed patron of the Castle of the Mountain. Long life to him! May he, like his host, be safe by day and by night; in the hill and on the waste; against the dagger and the bullet; in limb and in life! Cursed be he who touehes a hair of his head, or a baioecho in his pouch. Now and for ever we will proteet and honour him—for the

law or against the law—with the faith, and to the death. Amen. Amen!"

"Amen!" responded in wild chorus a hundred voices, and the scattered and straggling groups pressed up the street, nearer and nearer to the horseman.

"And that he may be known," continued the Englishman's strange protector, "to the eye and to the ear, I place around him the white sash, and I give him the sacred watchword—'*Peace to the Brave.*' Signor, when you wear this sash, the proudest in these parts will bare the head and bend the knee. Signor, when you utter this watchword, the bravest hearts will be bound to your bidding. Desire you safety, or ask you revenge—to gain a beauty, or to lose a foe—speak but the word, and we are yours, we are yours! Is it not so, comrades?" And again the hoarse voices shouted, "Amen, amen!"

"Now, signor," whispered the bravo, in good Italian, "if you have a few coins to spare, scatter them amongst the crowd, and let us be gone."

Glyndon, not displeased at the concluding sentence, emptied his purse in the street; and while, with mingled oaths, blessings, shrieks, and yells, men, women, and children scrambled for the money, the bravo, taking the rein of the horse, led it a few paces through the village at a brisk trot, and then turning up a narrow lane to the left, in a few minutes neither houses nor men were visible, and the mountains closed their path on either side. It was then that, releasing the bridle and slackening his pace, the guide turned his dark eyes on Glyndon with an arch expression, and said—

"Your Excellency was not, perhaps, prepared for the hearty welcome we have given you."

"Why, in truth, I *ought* to have been prepared for it, since my friend, to whose house I am bound, did not disguise from me the character of the neighbour-

hood. And your name, my friend, if I may call you so?"

"Oh, no ceremonies with me, Excellency. In the village I am generally called Maestro Paulo. I had a surname once, though a very equivocal one—and I have forgotten that since I retired from the world."

"And was it from disgust, from poverty, or from some—some ebullition of passion which entailed punishment—that you betook yourself to the mountains?"

"Why, signor," said the bravo, with a gay laugh, "hermits of my class seldom love the confessional. However, I have no secrets while my step is in these defiles, my whistle in my pouch, and my carbine at my back." With that the robber, as if he loved permission to talk at his will, hemmed thrice, and began with much humour; though, as his tale proceeded, the memories it roused seemed to carry him farther than he at first intended, and reckless and light-hearted ease gave way to that fierce and varied play of countenance and passion of gesture which characterise the emotions of his countrymen.

"I was born at Terracina—a fair spot, is it not? My father was a learned monk, of high birth; my mother—Heaven rest her!—an innkeeper's pretty daughter. Of course there was no marriage in the case; and when I was born, the monk gravely declared my appearance to be miraculous. I was dedicated from my cradle to the altar—and my head was universally declared to be the orthodox shape for a cowl. As I grew up, the monk took great pains with my education, and I learned Latin and psalmody as soon as less miraculous infants learn crowing. Nor did the holy man's care stint itself to my interior accomplishments. Although vowed to poverty, he always contrived that my mother should have her pockets full; and, between her pockets and mine, there was soon established a clandestine communication;

accordingly, at fourteen, I wore my cap on one side, stuck pistols in my belt, and assumed the swagger of a cavalier and a gallant. At that age my poor mother died; and about the same period, my father, having written a 'History of the Pontifical Bulls,' in forty volumes, and being, as I said, of high birth, obtained a cardinal's hat. From that time he thought fit to disown your humble servant. He bound me over to an honest notary at Naples, and gave me two hundred crowns by way of provision. Well, signor, I saw enough of the law to convince me that I should never be rogue enough to shine in the profession. So, instead of spoiling parchment, I made love to the notary's daughter. My master discovered our innocent amusement, and turned me out of doors—that was disagreeable. But my Ninetta loved me, and took care that I should not lie out in the streets with the lazzaroni. Little jade, I think I see her now, with her bare feet, and her finger to her lips, opening the door in the summer nights, and bidding me creep softly into the kitchen, where—praised be the saints!—a flask and a manchet always awaited the hungry amoroso. At last, however, Ninetta grew cold. It is the way of the sex, signor. Her father found her an excellent marriage in the person of a withered picture-dealer. She took the spouse, and very properly clapped the door in the face of the lover. I was not disheartened, Excellency; no, not I. Women are plentiful while we are young. So, without a ducat in my pocket, or a crust for my teeth, I set out to seek my fortune on board of a Spanish merchantman. That was duller work than I expected; but luckily we were attacked by a pirate—half the crew were butchered, the rest captured. I was one of the last—always in luck, you see, signor, monks' sons have a knack that way! The captain of the pirate took a fancy to me. 'Serve with us,' said he. 'Too happy,' said I. Behold me then a pirate. O jolly life!

how I blest the old notary for turning me out of doors! What feasting—what fighting—what wooing—what quarrelling. Sometimes we ran ashore and enjoyed ourselves like princes; sometimes we lay in a calm for days together, on the loveliest sea that man ever traversed. And then, if the breeze rose, and a sail came in sight, who so merry as we? I passed three years in that charming profession, and then, signor, I grew ambitious. I caballed against the captain—I wanted his post. One still night we struck the blow. The ship was like a log in the sea—no land to be seen from the mast-head, the waves like glass, and the moon at its full. Up we rose—thirty of us and more. Up we rose with a shout; we poured into the captain's cabin. I at the head. The brave old boy had caught the alarm, and there he stood at the doorway, a pistol in each hand—and his one eye (he had only one) worse to meet than the pistols were.

"'Yield,' cried I, 'your life shall be safe.'

"'Take that,' said he, and whizz went the pistol: but the saints took care of their own, and the ball passed by my cheek, and shot the boatswain behind me. I closed with the captain, and the other pistol went off without mischief in the struggle: such a fellow he was, six feet four without his shoes! Over we went—rolling each on the other. Santa Maria!—no time to get hold of one's knife. Meanwhile, all the crew were up, some for the captain, some for me—clashing and firing, and swearing and groaning, and now and then a heavy splash in the sea! Fine supper for the sharks that night! At last old Bilboa got uppermost: out flashed his knife; down it came, but not in my heart. No! I gave my left arm as a shield, and the blade went through and through up to the hilt, with the blood spirting up like the rain from a whale's nostril. With the weight of the blow the stout fellow came down, so that his face touched mine; with

my right hand I caught him by the throat, turned him over like a lamb, signor, and faith it was soon all up with him: the boatswain's brother, a fat Dutchman, ran him through with a pike.

"'Old fellow,' said I, as he turned up his terrible eye to me, 'I bear you no malice, but we must try to get on in the world, you know.' The captain grinned and gave up the ghost. I went upon deck—what a sight! Twenty bold fellows stark and cold, and the moon sparkling on the puddles of blood as calmly as if it were water. Well, signor, the victory was ours, and the ship mine: I ruled merrily enough for six months. We then attacked a French ship twice our size; what sport it was! And we had not had a good fight so long: we were quite like virgins at it! We got the best of it, and won ship and cargo. They wanted to pistol the captain; but that was against my laws; so we gagged him, for he scolded as loud as if we were married to him: left him and the rest of his crew on board our own vessel which was terribly battered; clapped our black flag on the Frenchman's, and set off merrily, with a brisk wind in our favour. But luck deserted us on forsaking our own dear old ship. A storm came on—a plank struck—several of us escaped in the boats: we had lots of gold with us, but no water. For two days and two nights we suffered horribly; but at last we ran ashore near a French seaport: our sorry plight moved compassion, and as we had money we were not suspected: people only suspect the poor. Here we soon recovered our fatigues, rigged ourselves out gaily, and your humble servant was considered as noble a captain as ever walked deck. But now, alas, my fate would have it that I should fall in love with a silk-mercer's daughter. Ah! how I loved her—the pretty Clara! Yes, I loved her so well, that I was seized with horror at my past life; I resolved to repent—to marry her—

and settle down into an honest man. Accordingly, I summoned my messmates, told them my resolution, resigned my command, and persuaded them to depart. They were good fellows; engaged with a Dutchman, against whom I heard afterwards they made a successful mutiny, but I never saw them more. I had two thousand crowns still left; with this sum I obtained the consent of the silk-mercer, and it was agreed that I should become a partner in the firm. I need not say that no one suspected I had been so great a man, and I passed for a Neapolitan goldsmith's son instead of a cardinal's. I was very happy then, signor, very—I could not have harmed a fly. Had I married Clara I had been as gentle a mercer as ever handled a measure."

The bravo paused a moment, and it was easy to see that he felt more than his words and tone betokened. "Well, well, we must not look back at the Past too earnestly,—the sunlight upon it makes one's eyes water. The day was fixed for our wedding—it approached: on the evening before the appointed day, Clara, her mother, her little sister and myself, were walking by the port, and as we looked on the sea I was telling them old gossip tales of mermaids and sea-serpents:—when a red-faced bottle-nosed Frenchman clapped himself right before me, and placing his spectacles very deliberately astride his proboscis, echoed out, '*Sacré, mille tonnerres!* This is the damned pirate that boarded the *Niobe!*'

"'None of your jests,' said I, mildly. 'Ho, ho,' said he. 'I can't be mistaken. Help there,' and he gripped me by the collar. I replied, as you may suppose, by laying him in the kennel; but it would not do. The French captain had a French lieutenant at his back, whose memory was as good as his master's. A crowd assembled—other sailors came up—the odds were

against me. I slept that night in prison; and, in a few weeks afterwards, I was sent to the galleys. They had spared my life because the old Frenchman politely averred that I had made my crew spare his. You may believe that the oar and the chain were not to my taste. I, and two others, escaped; they took to the road, and have, no doubt, been long since broken on the wheel. I, soft soul, would not commit another crime to gain my bread, for Clara was still at my heart with her soft eyes; so, limiting my rogueries to the theft of a beggar's rags, which I compensated by leaving him my galley attire instead, I begged my way to the town where I left Clara. It was a clear winter's day when I approached the outskirts of the town. I had no fear of detection, for my beard and hair were as good as a mask. Oh, Mother of Mercy! there came across my way a funeral procession! There, now, you know it. I can tell you no more. She had died, perhaps of love, more likely of shame. Do you know how I spent that night? I will tell you:—I stole a pickaxe from a mason's shed, and, all alone and unseen, under the frosty heavens I dug the fresh mould from the grave,—I lifted the coffin,—I wrenched the lid,—I saw her again—again. Decay had not touched her. She was always pale in her life!—I could have sworn she lived!—It was a blessed thing to see her once more,—and all alone too! But then at dawn, to give her back to the earth,—to close the lid, to throw down the mould, to hear the pebbles rattle on the coffin,—that was dreadful! Signor, I never knew before, and I don't wish to think now, how valuable a thing human life is. At sunrise I was again a wanderer; but now, that Clara was gone, my scruples vanished, and again I was at war with my betters. I contrived, at last, at O——, to get taken on board a vessel bound to Leghorn, working out my passage. From Leghorn I went to Rome, and stationed myself at the

door of the cardinal's palace. Out he came,—his gilded coach at the gate.

"'Ho, father,' said I, 'don't you know me?'

"'Who are you?'

"'Your son,' said I, in a whisper.

"The cardinal drew back, looked at me earnestly, and mused a moment. 'All men are my sons,' quoth he then, very mildly, 'there is gold for thee. To him who begs once, alms are due; to him who begs twice, jails are open. Take the hint, and molest me no more. Heaven bless thee!' With that he got into his coach, and drove off to the Vatican. His purse, which he had left behind, was well supplied. I was grateful and contented, and took my way to Terracina. I had not long passed the marshes, when I saw two horsemen approach at a canter.

"'You look poor, friend,' said one of them, halting; 'yet you are strong.'

"'Poor men and strong are both serviceable and dangerous, Signor Cavalier.'

"'Well said—follow us.'

"I obeyed and became a bandit. I rose by degrees; and as I have always been mild in my calling, and have taken purses without cutting throats, bear an excellent character, and can eat my macaroni at Naples without any danger to life and limbs. For the last two years I have settled in these parts, where I hold sway, and where I have purchased land. I am called a farmer, signor; and I myself now only rob for amusement, and to keep my hand in. I trust I have satisfied your curiosity. We are within a hundred yards of the castle."

"And how," asked the Englishman, whose interest had been much excited by his companion's narrative, "and how came you acquainted with my host? and by

what means has he so well conciliated the goodwill of yourself and your friends ? "

Maestro Paulo turned his black eyes gravely towards his questioner. "Why, signor," said he, "you must surely know more of the foreign cavalier with the hard name than I do. All I can say is, that about a fortnight ago I chanced to be standing by a booth in the Toledo at Naples, when a sober-looking gentleman touched me by the arm, and said, 'Maestro Paulo, I want to make your acquaintance; do me the favour to come into yonder tavern.' When we were seated, my new acquaintance thus accosted me:—'The Count d'O—— has offered to let me hire his old castle near B——. You know the spot ?'

" 'Extremely well; no one has inhabited it for a century at least; it is half in ruins, signor. A queer place to hire—I hope the rent is not heavy.'

" 'Maestro Paulo,' said he, 'I am a philosopher, and don't care for luxuries. I want a quiet retreat for some scientific experiments. The castle will suit me very well, provided you will accept me as a neighbour, and place me and my friends under your special protection. I am rich; but I shall take nothing to the castle worth robbing. I will pay one rent to the count, and another to you.'

" With that we soon came to terms, and as the strange signor doubled the sum I myself proposed, he is in high favour with all his neighbours. We would guard the old castle against an army. And now, signor, that I have been thus frank, be frank with me. Who is this singular cavalier ? "

" Who?—he himself told you, a philosopher."

" Hem! Searching for the philosopher's stone, eh? A bit of a magician;—afraid of the priests ? "

" Precisely. You have hit it."

"I thought so; and you are his pupil?"

"I am."

"I wish you well through it," said the robber, seriously, and crossing himself with much devotion: "I am not much better than other people, but one's soul is one's soul. I do not mind a little honest robbery, or knocking a man on the head if need be—but to make a bargain with the Devil!—Ah! take care, young gentleman, take care."

"You need not fear," said Glyndon, smiling; "my preceptor is too wise and too good for such a compact. But here we are, I suppose. A noble ruin! A glorious prospect!"

Glyndon paused delightedly, and surveyed the scene before and below with the eye of a poet and a painter. Insensibly, while listening to the bandit, he had wound up a considerable ascent, and now he was upon a broad ledge of rock covered with mosses and dwarf shrubs. Between this eminence and another of equal height, upon which the castle was built, there was a deep but narrow fissure, overgrown with the most profuse foliage, so that the eye could not penetrate many yards below the rugged surface of the abyss; but the profoundness might well be conjectured by the hoarse, low, monotonous sound of waters unseen that rolled below, and the subsequent course of which was visible at a distance in a perturbed and rapid stream that intersected the waste and desolate valleys. To the left, the prospect seemed almost boundless;—the extreme clearness of the purple air serving to render distinct the features of a range of country that a conqueror of old might have deemed in itself a kingdom. Lonely and desolate as the road which Glyndon had passed that day had appeared, the landscape now seemed studded with castles, spires, and villages. Afar off, Naples gleamed whitely in the last rays of the sun, and the rose-tints of

the horizon melted into the azure of her glorious bay. Yet more remote, and in another part of the prospect, might be caught, dim and shadowy, and backed by the darkest foliage, the ruined village of the ancient Possidonia. There, in the midst of his blackened and sterile realms, rose the dismal Mount of Fire: while, on the other hand, winding through variegated plains, to which distance lent all its magic, glittered many a stream, by which Etruscan and Sybarite, Roman, and Saracen, and Norman had, at intervals of ages, pitched the invading tent. All the visions of the past—the stormy and dazzling histories of Southern Italy—rushed over the artist's mind as he gazed below. And then, slowly turning to look behind, he saw the grey and mouldering walls of the castle in which he sought the secrets that were to give to hope in the Future a mightier empire than memory owns in the Past. It was one of those baronial fortresses with which Italy was studded in the earlier middle ages, having but little of the Gothic grace of grandeur which belongs to the ecclesiastical architecture of the same time; but rude, vast, and menacing even in decay. A wooden bridge was thrown over the chasm, wide enough to admit two horsemen abreast; and the planks trembled and gave back a hollow sound as Glyndon urged his jaded steed across.

A road that had once been broad, and paved with rough flags, but which now was half obliterated by long grass and rank weeds, conducted to the outer court of the castle hard by; the gates were open, and half the building in this part was dismantled, the ruins partially hid by ivy that was the growth of centuries. But on entering the inner court, Glyndon was not sorry to notice that there was less appearance of neglect and decay: some wild roses gave a smile to the gray walls, and in the centre there was a fountain, in which the waters still trickled coolly, and with a pleasing murmur,

from the jaws of a gigantic triton. Here he was met by Mejnour with a smile.

"Welcome, my friend and pupil," said he; "he who seeks for Truth can find in these solitudes an immortal Academe."

CHAPTER II.

The attendants which Mejnour had engaged for his strange abode were such as might suit a philosopher of few wants. An old Armenian, whom Glyndon recognised as in the mystic's service at Naples; a tall, hard-featured woman from the village, recommended by Maestro Paulo; and two long-haired, smooth-spoken, but fierce-visaged youths, from the same place, and honoured by the same sponsorship, constituted the establishment. The rooms used by the sage were commodious and weather-proof, with some remains of ancient splendour in the faded arras that clothed the walls and the huge tables of costly marble and elaborate carving. Glyndon's sleeping apartment communicated with a kind of belvidere or terrace that commanded prospects of unrivalled beauty and extent, and was separated, on the other side, by a long gallery and a flight of ten or a dozen stairs, from the private chambers of the mystic. There was about the whole place a sombre, and yet not displeasing, depth of repose. It suited well with the studies to which it was now to be appropriated.

For several days Mejnour refused to confer with Glyndon on the subjects nearest to his heart.

"All without," said he, "is prepared, but not all within. Your own soul must grow accustomed to the spot, and filled with the surrounding nature—for nature is the source of all inspiration."

With these words, which savoured a little of jargon, Mejnour turned to lighter topics. He made the Englishman accompany him in long marbules throgh the wild

scenes around, and he smiled approvingly when the young artist gave way to the enthusiasm which their fearful beauty could not have failed to rouse in a duller breast; and then Mejnour poured forth to his wondering pupil the stores of a knowledge that seemed inexhaustible and boundless. He gave accounts the most curious, graphic, and minute, of the various races, their characters, habits, creeds, and manners, by which that fair land had been successively overrun. It is true that his descriptions could not be found in books, and were unsupported by learned authorities, but he possessed the true charm of the tale-teller, and spoke of all with the animated confidence of a personal witness. Sometimes, too, he would converse upon the more durable and the loftier mysteries of Nature with an eloquence and a research which invested them with all the colours rather of poetry than science. Insensibly the young artist found himself elevated and soothed by the lore of his companion; the fever of his wild desires was slaked. His mind became more and more lulled into the divine tranquillity of contemplation; he felt himself a nobler being; and in the silence of his senses he imagined that he heard the voice of his soul.

It was to this state that Mejnour sought to bring the Neophyte, and in this elementary initiation the mystic was like every more ordinary sage. For he who seeks to discover must first reduce himself into a kind of abstract idealism, and be rendered up, in solemn and sweet bondage, to the faculties which contemplate and imagine.

Glyndon noticed that, in their rambles, Mejnour often paused where the foliage was rifest, to gather some herb or flower; and this reminded him that he had seen Zicci similarly occupied. "Can these humble children of nature," (said he one day to Mejnour,) "things that bloom and wither in a day, be serviceable to the science

of the higher secrets? Is there a pharmacy for the soul as well as the body, and do the nurslings of the summer minister not only to human health but spiritual immortality?"

"If," answered Mejnour, "before one property of herbalism was known to them, a stranger had visited a wandering tribe; if he had told the savages that the herbs, which every day they trampled under foot, were endowed with the most potent virtues; that one would restore to health a brother on the verge of death; that another would paralyse into idiocy their wisest sage; that a third would strike lifeless to the dust their most stalwart champion; that tears and laughter, vigour and disease, madness and reason, wakefulness and sleep, existence and dissolution, were coiled up in those unregarded leaves,—would they not have held him a sorcerer or a liar? To half the virtues of the vegetable world mankind are yet in the darkness of the savages, I have supposed. There are faculties within us with which certain herbs have affinity, and over which they have power. The moly of the ancients was not all a fable."

One evening, Glyndon had lingered alone and late upon the ramparts,—watching the stars as, one by one, they broke upon the twilight. Never had he felt so sensibly the mighty power of the heavens and the earth upon man! how much the springs of our intellectual being are moved and acted upon by the solemn influences of nature! As a patient on whom, slowly and by degrees, the agencies of mesmerism are brought to bear, he acknowledged to his heart the growing force of that vast and universal magnetism which is the life of creation, and binds the atom to the whole. A strange and ineffable consciousness of power, of the something great within the perishable clay, appealed to feelings at once dim and glorious,—rather faintly recognised than all unknown. An impulse that he could not resist

led him to seek the mystic. He would demand, that hour, his initiation into the worlds beyond our world—he was prepared to breathe a diviner air. He entered the castle, and strode through the shadowy and star-lit gallery which conducted to Mejnour's apartment.

THE END.*

[* So far as Zicci was ever finished.]

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